

# CITY OF DEL MAR

## SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

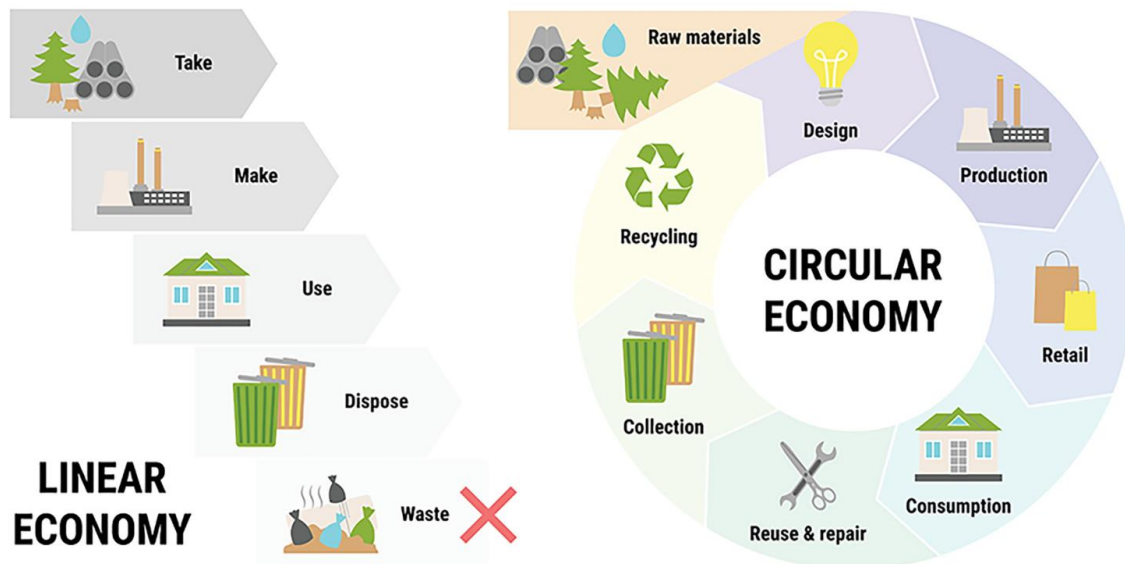
### Green Paper: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Prepared by the Sustainability Advisory Committee

The 3 Rs of green living are Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Together, they aim at diminishing our footprint, meaning the resources that we use and the waste that we generate.

#### Reducing:

The National Institute of Standards and technology (NIST), US Department of Commerce, identifies that a circular economy is key to solve our heavy consumption habits<sup>1</sup>. The circular economy would enable reusing and repurposing raw material versus extracting and depleting natural resources. The image below illustrate a continuum where resources are designed in function of their recycling capabilities, where waste generation is not part of the equation<sup>2</sup>.



*Credit: m.malinika/Shutterstock*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nist.gov/blogs/taking-measure/we-need-second-earth-support-our-current-consumption-we-can-do-better-if-we>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/what-circular-economy>

For consumers, reducing can be approached by “taking less and therefore disposing of less” (Solana Center for Environmental Innovation<sup>3</sup>). Taking less involves avoiding food waste by purchasing less food, assessing our typical consumption of goods, how necessary the goods are, the packaging that is involved in our purchases, and exploring alternatives that might have a greater lifespan, and an end-of-life that doesn't involve the landfills. Reducing our energy usage through energy efficient homes<sup>4</sup> and transportation are significant ways that one can lessen their environmental impact.

*Reducing* heavily relies on the second R, *Reusing*, as described by our waste collection and recycling company, EDCO Disposal:

“Practicing the art of source reduction is as easy as reusing your grocery bags or replacing paper napkins with cloth ones. These little changes are part of a practice called “precycling.” Precycling is one of the best habits a consumer can adopt as part of an effective and simple source-reduction plan.

Precycling simply means that each time you reach for an item in the grocery store, department store, fast food restaurant, or wherever, you consider how your purchase and its packaging will affect the environment.” (EDCO Disposal<sup>5</sup>)

The EPA’s illustration Think Green Before You Shop<sup>6</sup> at the very end of this Green Paper represents the suggested approach.

### **Reusing:**

By reusing goods, such as textiles, electronics, or furniture, we ensure that the energy, water, and emissions spent to manufacture, package, and transport the goods are not lost. We also ensure that the lifespan of an item is extended.

“The most effective way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place. Making a new product emits greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change and requires a lot of materials and energy - raw materials must be extracted from the earth, and the product must be fabricated then transported to wherever it will be sold.” (EPA<sup>7</sup>)

Reusing an item can be through repurposing, donating, swapping, or selling it. In the San Diego area, a few local organizations actively participate in circular economy, such as the Buy Nothing Project, Freecycle, Too Good To Go, and food rescue organizations for hunger-relief, such as Feeding San Diego or San Diego Gleaners.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://solanacenter.org/waste-reduction/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.delmar.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8884/102723\\_Green-Paper\\_Benefits-of-Energy-Efficient-Homes](https://www.delmar.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8884/102723_Green-Paper_Benefits-of-Energy-Efficient-Homes)

<sup>5</sup> <https://del-mar.edcodisposal.com/resource-center/recycling-guide/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/think-green-you-shop-full-infographic-image-jpg>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-and-reusing-basics>

Inside our homes, adopting reusable alternatives to disposable plastic and paper goods can include reusable fabric kitchen towels and napkins, gift wrap, straws, picnic utensils, glasses, and plates. For food and cleaning supplies, local stores offer refill stations and bulk bins to refill your own containers for detergents, foods, and oils. Many local coffee shops offer to fill up your own cup with your favorite drink.

### **Recycling:**

In Del Mar, we produce about 9,800 tons of solid waste annually, from which approximately 3,200 tons is recycled<sup>8</sup>. By diverting our refuse away from the landfills, we reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by the landfill while saving the limited landfill space. Recycling capabilities of diverse materials have expanded over time, with a few highlights:

- The recycling of solid food waste in the green bin started in the summer of 2023, welcoming bones and shells, spoiled foods, peels and seeds, food-soiled unwaxed paper goods, along with the traditional garden trimmings<sup>9</sup>.
- Styrofoam containers and packaging are now recyclable in the blue bin (not the Styrofoam pellets, however).
- Plastic bags, films and bubble wraps are readily recyclable at local grocery and department stores.
- In Del Mar, hazardous materials can be picked up at home for a \$10 fee, which is waived for 65+ residents<sup>10</sup>.
- Electronic waste can be dropped off at [EDCO's recycling center](#) or at the [Solana Center for Environmental Innovation](#).
- Expired or unused prescription medications can be safely disposed of using [drop-off service](#) available with the County of San Diego, thereafter reducing waterway pollution (do not flush them down the toilet!) and risks of unsafe use.

When in doubt about where an item should be disposed of, our waste collector EDCO Disposal offers a tool called [Where Does it Go?](#) You can also follow the Trash Talks from the Sustainability Advisory Committee for quick facts about sorting refuse and avoiding contamination. [Subscribe here](#) for the Del Mar Weekly where the Trash Talks are published.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.delmar.ca.us/675/Zero-Waste>

<sup>9</sup> <https://del-mar.edcodisposal.com/residential-waste-services/curbside-pickup/organic-recycling/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.delmar.ca.us/faq.aspx?TID=28>

# THINKGREEN BEFORE YOU SHOP

Do I need?  
Will I use?  
Do I already own?  
Can I borrow?

Be green! When you're out shopping, carefully choose what you buy and how much of it.

42% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are associated with the energy used to produce, process, transport, and dispose of our food and goods.



Do You Really Need It?



**Need something you don't use regularly?**

Borrow, rent, or share items that are used infrequently, like party decorations, tools, or furniture.

**Maintain and repair things you already own,** like clothing, furniture, and appliances, so they won't have to be thrown out and replaced as frequently.

## How "Green" Is It?

Companies can design their products to have as little environmental impact as possible. Keep an eye out for products that are designed with the environment in mind!



### Does the company that makes your product have green values and practice sustainability?

Do some research before buying! Some companies participate in EPA programs to help green their business practices, and others have eco-labels and standards to help consumers make the greener choice: [www.epa.gov/greenproducts](http://www.epa.gov/greenproducts)



#### ENERGY STAR®

ENERGY STAR products are independently certified to save energy without sacrificing features or functionality. Look for the ENERGY STAR label to save money on your energy bills and help protect our environment.



#### WaterSense

WaterSense labeled products are backed by independent certification, and they meet EPA's specifications for water efficiency and performance.



#### Design for the Environment (DfE)

The Design for the Environment (DfE) label allows consumers to quickly identify and choose products that can help protect the environment and are safer for families.



### Is it built to last?

The more durable a product is, the less likely you'll need to replace it.



### Is it made of recycled materials and easily recyclable?

Check the label to see if the product is made from recycled materials and if it can be recycled. Buying products with recycled content encourages manufacturers to make more recycled-content products available.



### Is it sustainable?

Consider buying sustainably and locally produced products, which may reduce environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions.



### Is it more eco-friendly to buy your product in bulk?

If you use this product a lot, you could be reducing waste by buying your product in bulk instead of buying smaller, individual amounts.

**Buy reusable instead of disposable items.**

For example, bring your own silverware and cups to lunch, rather than using disposable items.

**Can You Reuse It?**



**Can You Buy It Used?**

**Save money!**

You can find everything from clothes to building materials at consignment shops and specialized reuse centers. Used items are often less expensive and just as good as new.



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For more information on what you can do to reduce, reuse, and recycle, please go to [www.epa.gov/recycle](http://www.epa.gov/recycle)

<sup>1</sup> Opportunities to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Materials and Land Management Practices (PDF) [http://www.epa.gov/oswer/docs/ghg\\_land\\_and\\_materials\\_management.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oswer/docs/ghg_land_and_materials_management.pdf)