

## CCRI: CANADA'S LEADER IN MUNICIPAL CIRCULAR ECONOMY CAPACITY BUILDING

It's been just three years since the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) was launched—but it's already had a significant impact in Canada's net-zero transition. As the country's only bilingual capacity-building organization aimed at municipalities and local governments, the CCRI has become a known name in the circular economy space and has supported more than 25 communities from coast to coast in their circularity journeys, earning recognition as a [Clean50 Top Project](#) winner. This has included more than 130 hours of engagement in both French and English with the CCRI's Peer to Peer Network, involving more than 600 local government representatives nationwide.

Cities are home to the vast majority of Canadians and at the centre of our economy, which makes them an extremely powerful place to effect change. Circular economy methods are essential to help local governments meet their climate change resilience and adaptation targets while continuing to lower emissions.

### WHAT IS THE CCRI?

The CCRI was created to help local governments further their understanding of circularity and build it into their planning and operations. A team effort developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund, the National Zero Waste Council/Metro Vancouver, the Recycling Council of Alberta and RECYC-QUÉBEC, the CCRI aims to advance circular economy knowledge-sharing and capacity-building in Canadian communities and regions of all sizes.

A COLLABORATION OF



Across Canada, many communities were already integrating circularity into their practices and policies. But what was lacking was capacity, both to create and expand local initiatives and to share ideas and best practices with other municipalities. That's the gap the CCRI has been able to fill with its workshops, coaching and networking opportunities—supporting local governments in working toward circular economy goals tailored for their regions and communities.

The CCRI is a catalyst for circular economy successes at the municipal level, where meaningful change actually happens. These circularity projects are a means for communities to directly address the climate emergency, enabling governments, residents and the private sector to collectively decrease their environmental impact. Municipalities are already ramping up their circular economy initiatives on their own. Imagine what they could achieve with broader, more robust support?

“The circular economy is at the heart of the City of Montréal’s strategies. It is a concrete way to achieve our ecological transition objectives while ensuring the economic development of our metropolis. The collaboration with CCRI has allowed Montréal to reflect on these issues and to consult with stakeholders in order to develop a common vision.”

– Mayor Valérie Plante, City of Montréal

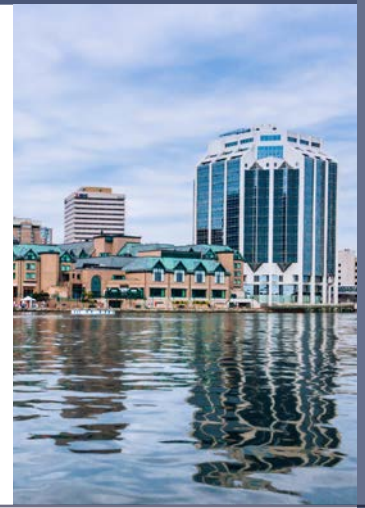


## THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS A RESPONSE TO THE MUNICIPAL CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

Put simply, the circular economy encourages us to do more and better with less: to rethink our need for a product or a particular resource, to design products to last and be reused and to give resources new life by ensuring they are recycled or put back into the system as opposed to creating waste. It's a shift toward a future in which we regenerate natural systems, design out waste and pollution and keep products and materials in use for as long as possible, building off existing successes in waste management, recycling, reuse and being smarter with our resources in general.

Most important for local governments, the circular economy is an exciting opportunity for cities and regions to create economic, social and environmental resilience. It provides a framework for achieving climate action commitments while also nurturing a prosperous and equitable future for communities and businesses. In the face of climate change and the challenges it brings, circularity gives communities the chance to take action at a local level, producing benefits that are felt both locally and around the world.

Canadian cities are at the centre of our national economy and are hotspots of innovation and creativity: 81 percent of the population lives in metropolitan regions, and 61 percent of Canada's GDP is generated in cities. That's why facilitating adoption of circular principles among municipalities is an essential step in advancing circularity everywhere. Cities, after all, contain a level of resource flows that can generate economies of scale to advance circular economy activities, as they provide key services, directly interface with community stakeholders and other governments and have access to legal tools to influence activities and behaviours in the community.



## HOW COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM CCRI PROGRAMMING

The CCRI focuses its efforts in three streams:

1. Inspiring local governments by informing them about world-class circular economy initiatives both in Canada and globally.
2. Connecting municipal staff from coast to coast so that they can access experts and discuss approaches with peers.
3. Enabling communities to help them make concrete progress on their circular economy journeys.

Participating cities and regions value CCRI programming for helping them expand their knowledge base, share experiences and knowledge, meet subject matter experts and network with other communities and organizations working on circular economy initiatives. The CCRI is helping Canadian municipalities bridge huge geographic distances so they can work together on initiatives that matter to all.

## WHAT THE CCRI OFFERS

The CCRI's goal is to inspire, connect and enable local governments so that they can lead the way in Canada's circular economy transition—in both official languages. CCRI offerings include:

- A national webinar series aimed at sharing knowledge by exploring innovative circular city approaches from Canada and the world;
- In-depth access to Canadian and international circular economy experts;
- A peer-to-peer network that allows participants to discuss approaches with fellow municipalities across the country;
- Facilitated virtual workshops on a range of circularity topics;
- Coaching, guidance and one-on-one support to help participating local governments take the next steps in their circular economy journeys and measure success; and
- A Circular Opportunities report customized to each community's goals and needs.

“Participating in the peer-to-peer network and learning from peer municipalities has been a rewarding experience, helping us advance on the circular economy and building on existing City initiatives such as the Central Library renovation project that successfully diverted more than 120,000 kg of materials from landfill.”

– Jodi Robillos, Commissioner, Community Services,  
City of Mississauga

## RESULTS AND IMPACT

In its first two years, the CCRI has spearheaded a national discussion on best practices and resulted in measurable impact in 25 cities and regions across Canada, **engaging with more than 2,200 practitioners through:**

**7**

national webinars,

**38**

community action planning workshops,

**25**

one-on-one community interviews, and

**22**

peer-to-peer networking sessions and workshops,

**35**

community roadmaps and strategic opportunity reports,

**150+**

hours of engagement involving **600+** local government representatives across the country.

“CCRI gave us the chance to connect with and learn from other communities, especially those that are further ahead on the circular economy journey. The workshop was very helpful. Our goal is to use our learnings and work with Calgarians to define short-, medium- and long-term circular economy plans.”

– Lee-Anne Bell, Leader, Strategic Planning & Policy—Waste & Recycling, City of Calgary

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE CCRI

With two years of successful partnerships under its belt, the CCRI is moving into its third year with a focus on:

- Growing and strengthening the peer-to-peer network with diverse representation from communities across the country;
- Advancing and documenting circular economy implementation and action at the local level; and
- Developing and testing circular economy tools, guidance and co-learning opportunities for local governments.

Across Canada, local networks are emerging to create, develop and expand circular economy initiatives and take real climate action. Thanks to its expertise in capacity-building, the CCRI is uniquely positioned to bring these networks together and support them in their efforts while also bringing new communities on board. To make this happen, the CCRI itself needs to expand its partnerships and support base so that together, the CCRI and its partners can facilitate greater cooperation between local movements across the country to build a cohesive voice and expand our achievements.

“The main lesson from participating in the CCRI has been the ability to take stock of the initiatives and activities currently being undertaken in all three local municipalities that are circular in nature but not marketed as circular. There’s a great amount of work that we can tap into to further advance circularity.”

– Erwin Pascual, Manager, Waste Planning, Peel Region

“Through the CCRI, our administration has been able to structure itself in the circular economy and advance its thinking. The synergy between departments and partners has allowed our actions to accelerate the deployment of the circular economy in our region.”

– Ingrid Dubuc, Environment Office Director, City of Sherbrooke

#### CCRI'S VISION: TO ENABLE CIRCULAR ECONOMY LEADERSHIP AND ACTION IN CANADIAN COMMUNITIES.

Seventy percent of global emissions are tied to material use and handling. Supporting the development of local circular economies could help reduce high transportation costs by shortening supply chains and retaining value locally. By implementing circular solutions and integrating them within existing climate plans, cities can lead both the net-zero and circular transition in Canada.

