

# Circular Cities & Regions Initiative

Providing Canadian local governments with the knowledge and tools to accelerate circular economy solutions

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## CANADA'S CIRCULAR CITIES AND REGIONS INITIATIVE IS LEADING THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION

Momentum towards a circular economy in Canada is building, and Canadian cities and regions are helping to lead the way through the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI).

The CCRI, which was launched by the National Zero Waste Council, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund, the Recycling Council of Alberta, and RECYC-QUÉBEC in 2021, aims to advance circular economy knowledge and capacity in Canadian communities of all sizes.

In the CCRI's first 12 months, 15 cities and regions participated in an immersive year of circular economy knowledge sharing and capacity building. Ten more communities have now completed a similar year of activities and are taking the next steps on their own circular economy journey: Pinawa, Peel, Squamish, Peterborough, Yorkton, Kelowna, Guelph-Wellington, Haute Yamaska & Granby, Outremont, and Chibougamau.

Cities and regions are key to advancing circularity and addressing climate change. Over 80% of Canadians live in metropolitan regions, but our communities are often separated by vast distances. As identified in the Council of Canadian Academies' foundational report, [Turning Point](#), our unique geography and population distribution means that accelerating regional circular development strategies will be as important to the country's circular economy transition as sector-specific efforts<sup>1</sup>.

Seventy percent of global emissions are tied to [material use and handling](#)<sup>2</sup>. 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.

The 10 local governments that participated in the CCRI's 2022-2023 cohort are geographically diverse and varied in size and economic context, with each having their own unique entry point to the circular economy. To help kick-start thinking across different departments, the communities benefited from having a community action planning workshop hosted by Circle Economy - a global impact organisation based in Amsterdam. The workshops helped the communities identify opportunities and next steps with respect to their circular economy journey, and it came as no surprise that each community had its own challenges and priorities.

For Yorkton, Saskatchewan, the community workshop provided a better understanding of the circular economy and connected the municipality to more experienced peers. 'We are using what we have learned from this workshop to prioritize and implement initiatives which will benefit our community.'

<sup>1</sup> Council of Canadian Academies, 2021. [Turning Point](#), Ottawa (ON). The Expert Panel on the Circular Economy in Canada, Council of Canadian Academies.

<sup>2</sup> Circle Economy (2023). The Circularity Gap Report. Retrieved from: Circularity Gap Report Initiative

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One of our main lessons is that you can't do everything at once! Being a smaller community, we have had to be specific and pick initiatives that fit our community's needs,' Lyndon Hicks, Solid Waste and Environmental Programs Manager, City of Yorkton.

The smallest community, Pinawa, Manitoba, has only 1,558 residents. As a starting point, they are building on their success with community events, expanding them to include additional circular activities such as repair workshops and the recycling collection of special products.

Meanwhile, Peel Region, Ontario, with a population surpassing 1.5 million, has identified the need for circular economy solutions and strategies with regard to public procurement. '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.

Haute Yamaska & Granby, Quebec, which house a robust industrial sector, determined that they are well-poised to boost industrial symbiosis, transforming by-products and waste generated by one company into raw materials for another company. This would include a focus on increasing the circulation of more sustainable materials, like those that are recyclable, renewable, and non-toxic, as feedstock for industry.

Further west, the City of Kelowna, British Columbia, is experiencing significant growth and development and is leveraging its participation in the CCRI to focus on the built environment, including considering policy options to address embodied carbon in new buildings and exploring ways to discourage the demolition of older buildings.

These CCRI member cities and regions, alongside others across the country, are leading the way in Canada's circular economy transition. They are unlocking new economic opportunities, accelerating progress on climate change, and creating thriving communities from coast to coast to coast.

To find out how to get involved with the CCRI, reach out directly about future opportunities to join the next cohort of communities or learn more at [www.canadiancircularcities.ca](http://www.canadiancircularcities.ca). For more information on how to get started on your own local circular economy journey, check out, [A Guide to Catalyzing a Circular Economy in Your Community](#), produced by FCM's Green Municipal Fund.