

# Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on October 30, 2024

## M.L. 2021 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2024

**Project Title:** Create Jobs Statewide by Diverting Materials from Landfills

**Project Manager:** Jason Allen

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**Funding Source:**

**Fiscal Year:**

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 07e

**Appropriation Amount:** \$2,244,000

**Amount Spent:** \$2,234,212

**Amount Remaining:** \$9,788

### Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

The aim of the project was to minimize the effects of human activity that might alter Minnesota's ecological balance by diverting reusable materials from the waste stream. The partners documented the reclaimed materials and measured Green House Gas emissions sequestered along with the environmental impact and benefits of the project

### Overall Project Outcome and Results

Seeking to change how waste is managed, the goal of the project was to demonstrate the viability of alternative operating models that would extend the life cycle for materials that would end up in State landfills.

The project employed five waste diversion strategies for the prevention and reduction of generated waste through repurpose, recycling, and reuse. The five strategies included transfer station collection at sites in Becker County, Dodge County and Cambridge. curbside collection in the City of Bloomington, seven municipal collection events in six Hennepin County cities , 35 deconstruction projects throughout the State, and material donation drop-offs. The project highlighted the advantages of reuse and generated environmental, financial, and social benefits that support the 3 Pillars of

sustainability: Planet - Reducing the burden on State landfills by diverting over 3,800 tons of reusable materials, helped mitigate environmental degradation, and promote the preservation of ecological balance with the avoidance of 12,408 metric tons of GHG emissions. People – Promoting social responsibility with the donation of reusable items helped support local communities and charitable organizations. Along with providing workforce training opportunities to over 100 formerly incarcerated men. Economy – The avoidance of approximately \$144,163 in costs associated with landfill use, and the creation of 8 full-time jobs.

The project was a great opportunity for Minnesota’s environment and citizens, placing us at the forefront of creating a circular economy, where waste is viewed as a resource instead of a burden, providing strategic solutions for the repurposing of waste materials, driving innovation and sustainability. Overall, this project was an investment in Minnesota’s future: by reducing landfill use, reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions, helping to ensure the future quality of our air, water and land; and helping to build a more stable environmental and economic future by fueling the emergence of new businesses.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

A 28-page detailed report outlining this project, lessons learned, and highlighting the importance of material diversion has been uploaded to the LCCMR website. The partners routinely shared stories and provided updates highlighting project activities and work performed at multiple presentations, and conferences listed below:

2022 - Q1 2022 MN Built Environment meeting, Reuse Minnesota’s Reuse22 Conference.

2023 - The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Recycling Committee’s Innovative Bulk Material Collection Programs meeting, and Reuse Minnesota’s Reuse23 Conference

2024 - Solid Waste Association of North America / Air&Waste Management Association Regional Meeting and Minnesota Conference, Northwest & Central Regional Landfill Operators meeting.



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2021 Approved Final Report

### General Information

**Date:** November 21, 2024

**ID Number:** 2021-344

**Staff Lead:** Michael Varien

**Project Title:** Create Jobs Statewide by Diverting Materials from Landfills

**Project Budget:** \$2,244,000

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Jason Allen

**Organization:** Better Futures Minnesota

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**Email:** jallen@betterfutures.net

**Web Address:** <https://betterfuturesminnesota.com/>

### Project Reporting

**Final Report Approved:** October 30, 2024

**Reporting Status:** Project Completed

**Date of Last Action:** October 30, 2024

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2024

### Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 07e

**Appropriation Language:** \$2,244,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for agreements with Better Futures Minnesota and the Natural Resources Research Institute to partner with cities, counties, and businesses to create and implement a collection, restoration, reuse, and repurpose program that diverts used household goods and building materials from entering the waste stream and thereby reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Net income generated by Better Futures Minnesota as part of this appropriation may be reinvested in the project if a plan for reinvestment is approved in the work plan.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2024



## Narrative

**Project Summary:** By diverting over 15,000 tons of used household goods and building materials from the waste stream, this project will: reduce CO2 emissions; create 13 jobs; and, launch two businesses

**Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

45% of emissions worldwide comes from the production of consumer goods and buildings. The preservation of Minnesota's air, water and land, depends on adopting viable practices for reducing the harmful effects of making, using, and then discarding consumer goods and buildings. Yet, most efforts to reduce harmful emissions have focused on the energy sector.

Here are two examples of how the current process of extracting virgin materials and then throwing them away have a negative effect on Minnesota's environment. 1) The MPCA has identified at 42 landfills across the State which are leeching toxic chemicals. 2) Based on data from a previous LCCMR-funded project, the partners found the demolition of a typical house emits 250 million metric tons of CO2. This level of pollution is equal to driving 5 cars for a year.

The serious harm caused by current practices, however, is a great opportunity for Minnesota's environment and citizens. An alternative production model, focused on restoration, regeneration, and reuse of products and materials yields significant environmental and economic benefits. Instead of discarding goods and materials (assets) after only one product cycle, companies are developing ways to continually re-acquire and re-introduce these assets back into the marketplace.

**What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.**

This project will foster the development of sustainable practices for diverting consumer goods and materials from the waste stream throughout the State. Just as important, the partners will test and help build small businesses focused on reusing, repairing, or re-purposing the goods and materials diverted.

Our goal is to demonstrate the viability of alternative business and operating models that generate multiple life cycles for products and materials through restoration, re-purposing, or reuse. We will also document the significant environmental and economic benefits of these new business processes. Overall, this project is an investment in Minnesota's future: by reducing harmful emissions, we help ensure the future quality of our air, water and land; and, by fueling the emergence of new businesses with jobs for local people, we help build a more stable environmental and economic future.

**What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

This project will benefit Minnesotans and preserve our air, water, and land. Specific outcomes include:

1. Diverting at least 15,000 tons of used consumer goods and building materials from the waste stream;
2. Reducing or averting the emission of at least 11,000 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions;
3. Developing local practices and businesses focused on restoration, re-purposing or reuse;
4. Building markets for products or materials restored, reused, or repurposed;
5. Creating at least 13 FT sustainable jobs with living wages and benefits.

## Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Statewide

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Implement waste diversion practices at transfer stations

**Activity Budget:** \$1,096,168

**Activity Description:**

- a) Host briefing sessions for county staff statewide to introduce this project and present the multiple benefits of diverting goods and materials from the waste stream
- b) Draft templates for operating agreements and budgets for waste diversion program at transfer stations based on feedback and advice from county staff
- c) Establish operating agreements for county partners; agreements outline roles and responsibilities of all parties, performance expectations, budget, fee schedules, metrics and staffing plans
- d) Hire and prepare local staff for diversion and processing team at the sites, includes operating protocols and work processes
- e) NRRI and Ecotone Partners prepare and implement tools for collecting data to measure the social, economic and environment impact/benefits of diverting the materials from transfer stations
- f) Launch operations and produce performance and impact reports every six months; share reports via social media outlets

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
First of six-month performance and impact reports are completed and distributed via social media	January 31, 2022
At least 8 briefing sessions for county staff statewide to introduce project are completed	April 30, 2022
Operating agreements with 3 county partners are signed	December 31, 2022
Local staff for diversion and processing at 3 sites are hired and trained	March 31, 2023
A final impact report is produced: emissions averted; waste diverted; jobs created	July 31, 2023

### Activity 2: Develop, test, and implement financially viable methods for restoring, repurposing or reusing of materials diverted from the waste stream

**Activity Budget:** \$332,436

**Activity Description:**

- a) Identify current businesses focused on using reclaimed materials and determine capacity/willingness to work with more materials. NRRI will assist Better Futures in identifying and meeting with these existing businesses
- b) Coordinate research about emerging restoration, reuse, or re-purposing methods using materials diverted from the waste stream, focusing on building materials, furniture, textiles, mattresses, and carpet; led by NRRI
- c) Based on feedback from existing business and NRRI research explore ways to expand uses and markets for materials diverted from the waste stream; share ideas and findings with business community and government partners
- d) Develop 6 prototypes from material reclaimed and share as opportunities for material re-purposing; led by NRRI
- e) Fully develop an online retail site for promoting the sale of reclaimed materials and repurposed products
- f) Fully develop and maintain a social media network to promote online sales and the value/impact of reuse, repair and repurposing

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Social media network to promote retail sales and value/impact of reuse is operational	June 30, 2022
4 briefing sessions to share NRRI research and explore new ideas for reuse are held	December 31, 2022

Online retail site for promoting the sale of reclaimed materials and repurposed products is operational	December 31, 2022
6 prototypes made from reclaimed materials are produced and shared	July 31, 2023

### Activity 3: Provide pick up services for cities, households and businesses with used products and materials in the Twin Cities

**Activity Budget:** \$741,439

**Activity Description:**

- a) Host briefing sessions for city staff, neighborhood groups, and local businesses in the Twin Cities to introduce this project and assess the level of interest in supporting a curbside/job site pick up service that reuses, repairs and repurposes the materials collected
- b) Draft templates for operating agreements and budgets for a full time curbside/job pick up service based on feedback and advice from city staff, homeowners and local businesses
- c) Establish operating agreements for county partners; agreements outline roles and responsibilities of all parties, performance expectations, budget, fee schedule, metrics and staffing plan
- d) Hire and prepare local staff for this collection and processing activity, includes operating protocols and work processes
- e) NRRI and Ecotone Partners will prepare and implement tools for collecting data to measure the social, economic and environment impact/benefits of collecting and reusing the materials collected
- f) Launch operations and produce performance reports every six months; distribute via social media outlets

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
First of six-month performance reports and impact reports are distributed via social media	December 31, 2021
Local staff for collection and processing are hired and trained	March 31, 2022
Operating agreements with 3 partners/customers are signed	December 31, 2022
15 briefing sessions for potential partners/customers to introduce this project are held	July 31, 2023

### Activity 4: Assist with developing two new businesses for restoring, repurposing and/or reusing of materials diverted from the waste

**Activity Budget:** \$73,957

**Activity Description:**

- a) Based on NRRI research, and information from existing reuse businesses, government partners, and collection customers, draft business and financial plans for two new businesses
- b) Identify individuals/partners interested in launching new businesses
- c) Provide advice for individuals/partners in organizing and launching new businesses focused on reuse, repair, and/or repurposing

This activity is about helping to develop and launch several reuse businesses owned by private individuals. A portion of the LCCMR Project Manager’s time will be used to provide advice and coaching for these business owners. The partners will also use webinars and training sessions to train and advise potential owners. Other than the Project Manager’s time, no other project grant funds will be used for this activity. This activity is directly related to disseminating the lessons and experience accumulated during the operation of this project. The goal is to support the launch or at least prepare owners to launch several small businesses. No earned revenue is expected from these small business services during the grant period. If any revenue is generated during the grant period, Better Futures will contact LCCMR to determine if additional approvals are necessary to satisfy the appropriation law requirements for this project.



**Activity Milestones:**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Approximate Completion Date</b>
Draft business and financial plans for two new businesses are completed	January 31, 2023
Individuals/partners interested in launching new businesses are identified	January 31, 2023
Two new businesses focused on reuse, repair, and/or repurposing are launched	July 31, 2023

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Victor Krause	Natural Resources Research Council (NRRRI)	NRRRI will research emerging techniques for re-purposing used goods such as building materials, furniture, textiles, and mattresses. Assist with identifying businesses focused on re-purposing such materials. Support the development of prototypes using reclaimed materials; and with Ecotone Partners measure the economic, social and environmental impact of this project	Yes

## Dissemination

**Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.**

The partners will ensure the acknowledgement requirements prescribed for ENRTF will be followed. Specifically, when appropriate, the ENRTF will be acknowledged through the use of the ENRTF logo and/or attribution language on this project's print and electronic media, presentations, publications, and other communications.

Throughout the grant period, the partners will be routinely sharing stories, providing updates and disseminating performance data via multiple social media channels.

At the end of the grant period, the partners will produce a manual and training curriculum to support the operation of waste diversion, material recovery, and pick up services. This resource will be accessible via the partner's websites. We will work with county partners to promote and publicize waste diversion activities occurring in their localities. The partners will develop briefing materials and graphs to support the expansion of this project to sites throughout the State.

The partners will prepare banners and "lawn signs" to place at job sites to explain our work and promote the project. The box truck purchased with LCCMR funds will acknowledge the support of the ENRTF grant and carry a tagline about the goals of this project

Environmental, economic and social impact reports for each major component of this project: curbside pick up, waste diversion at landfills, and repair efforts will be prepared and shared via six month reports.

A report summarizing the experiences related to developing the two new businesses will be produced and shared via the partners' final report.

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?**

A major aim of this project is to develop business models and multi-year financial plans to sustain the core activities of this project. The grant period will enable the partners to test assumptions related to the level of commitment from counties, the volume and demand for used and repurposed products, and the amounts of revenue that can realistically be generated by each activity. Based on two years of experience, the partners expect to support sustainable diversion, collection, and repurposing activities with fee income and revenue generated by the sale of used and repurposed goods.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
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Building Deconstruction to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Solid Waste	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 07c1	\$845,000
Expand Materials Reuse and Recycling Jobs Program	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 05k	\$800,000

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>Personnel</b>										
Workers		Work at transfer stations diverting and packaging reclaimed materials; picking up used materials at curb or job sites; working on reuse, restoration and repurposing projects			26.33%	12		\$558,624	-	-
Field Supervisors		Daily supervision of workers at transfer stations and pick up services; supervision of workers assigned to reuse, restoration and repurposing projects			26.33%	8		\$614,201	-	-
Retail Sales Manager		Manages the online sales platform and in-person sale of reclaimed materials generated by the project. This role has been in place since the start of the project and was added retroactively to the approved June 6, 2022 amendment because it was not included in the originally submitted budget.			44.62%	1		\$107,846	-	-
Vice President for Enterprise Services		Oversee operations of work crews; assist with managing relations with partners and customers			15.88%	0.5		\$35,382	-	-
Business Support & Communications Manager		Coordinate and disseminate stories, results and impact statements of this project and provide administrative support for the project			22.33%	2		\$128,162	-	-
Project Manager for LCCMR Grant, beginning 10-1-21		Oversee the activities and partnerships required to meet the goals and outcomes for this project			15.88%	2		\$267,322	-	-
Appliance Recycling Manager		Oversee the recycling of metal and appliances that are dropped off			44.62%	1		\$82,470	-	-

		and picked up during waste diversion activities								
Waste Diversion Manager		Respond to all inquiries, assist with all reporting as related to LCCMR project, assist with the coordination of hosted briefing sessions, develop waste diversion partnerships			18%	2		\$154,461	-	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,948,468</b>	<b>\$1,943,222</b>	<b>\$5,246</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>										
University of Minnesota Duluth, Natural Resources Research Institute	Sub award	NRRI will: research emerging techniques for repurposing used goods such as building materials, furniture, textiles, and mattresses. Assist with identifying businesses focused on repurposing such materials. Collect data and with Ecotone Partners prepare economic, social, and environmental impact reports for this project's activities.				1.62		\$172,411	\$167,891	\$4,520
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$172,411</b>	<b>\$167,891</b>	<b>\$4,520</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>										
	Tools and Supplies	PPP safety gear, fall protection gear, remote time clocks for staff in Greater Minnesota, power saws, tool boxes, power drills and denailers, generators	These tools will be used to repair, restore, repurpose or dismanlte materials diverted					\$40,513	\$40,491	\$22
	Equipment	Purchase and/or Rental of steel Shipping Containers, storage units, and warehouse space	For storing materials diverted at transfer stations; for storing materials picked up from customers; and for storing tools and equipment at job sites	X				\$15,830	\$15,830	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$56,343</b>	<b>\$56,321</b>	<b>\$22</b>

<b>Capital Expenditures</b>										
		15 foot, cab over engine, crew cab box truck with lift gate	For transporting diverted materials from collection sites to locations for sale, repair, and/or repurposing	X				\$50,000	\$50,000	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>										
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Estimated 10,895 miles with vehicles not purchased with LCCMR funds at .55 a mile = \$5,992; Gas for trucks purchased with LCCMR funds, estimate of 12,000 traveled = \$8000	Mileage for transport of materials among collection sites and from Greater MN to Minneapolis warehouse					\$495	\$495	-
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	20 day visits/workshops, 4 people per trip x 400 miles per trip x .55 per mile + \$960 for food = \$5360	Day Trips: Mileage and meals for in-state travel for up to 20 workshops, meetings with public agency staff, and business development support					\$2,443	\$2,443	-
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	20 trips x 0.55 per mile x 400 miles per trip \$4,400; Lodging 40 nights x \$200 = \$8000; 120 meals x \$12 a meal = \$1,440	Overnight Travel: 20 overnight trips with meals in State for workshops and agency staff meetings, trainings and business development support in Greater Minnesota					\$13,840	\$13,840	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$16,778</b>	<b>\$16,778</b>	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-

<b>Printing and Publication</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,244,000</b>	<b>\$2,234,212</b>	<b>\$9,788</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>		Purchase and/or Rental of steel Shipping Containers, storage units, and warehouse space	The renting of storage units and or warehouse space is in direct connection to the work being done on the project. In order to expand the collection and processing of diverted materials in the Metro area we will need a place to house this material. In some instances it may not be prudent nor feasible to rent or buy a storage container. This space would be offsite from the warehouse that Better Futures conducts business. This space would be specific to the work being done on the project. It would be a temporary arrangement that would not exceed the life of the project.
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>		15 foot, cab over engine, crew cab box truck with lift gate	A cost effectiveness analysis has been prepared and the analysis is attached as an optional document <b>Additional Explanation :</b> This project is expected to be maintained and expanded to more parts of the State after the two year LCCMR grant ends. The partners expect the long term operation of the project to be sustained by fee income and earned income generated by providing the services described in this work plan. The truck purchased with LCCMR funds will continue to be dedicated to the activities described in this work plan. It will continue to be used by Better Futures to collect and transport diverted materials from landfills and collection sites statewide throughout its useful life.



## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>State</b>						
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Non-State</b>						
In-Kind	Better Futures Minnesota and at least three county partners, not yet identified	The cumulative value of county/Better Futures staff time, work space and utility costs, equipment, insurance, and other operating and administrative costs NOT covered by the LCCMR funds	Pending	\$2,125,000	-	\$2,125,000
Cash	Foundations and Revenue from Reuse Activities	These revenue sources will be used to cover costs not funded by the LCCMR grant. Please see the partners' request to reinvest revenue.	Potential	\$850,000	-	\$850,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$2,975,000</b>	-	<b>\$2,975,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$2,975,000</b>	-	<b>\$2,975,000</b>

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [f7893e96-6dc.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

The attached slide deck presents pictures and highlights from a pilot waste diversion and reuse pilot in Becker County. This pilot, funded with 2018 ENRTF dollars is one prototype for the type of initiatives that will be developed Statewide with this new grant.

The presentation shows the type of materials rescued from the Becker County landfill and it shows scenes from sales events where local residents could shop and buy the materials reclaimed....

#### *Financial Capacity*

File: [9975eb8a-873.pdf](#)

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Letter from Better Futures Board Chair	<a href="#">1dd8324f-8ce.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

#### *Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
45% of GHG Emissions Generated by Production and Consumption	<a href="#">d20757c3-bb4.pdf</a>
IRS 990 for The Network for Better Futures	<a href="#">d8fcd3cc-9ba.pdf</a>
Cost Effectiveness Analysis for Capital Expense	<a href="#">f1cd49b5-466.docx</a>
Background Check Certification Form	<a href="#">f91f5a76-6c7.pdf</a>
M.L. 2021-344 07e Project Report 09162024	<a href="#">00e99fe4-889.pdf</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

Due to the decrease in the amount of funds awarded, this work plan was adjusted to reflect a reduced level of activity, including:

The projected amount of waste diverted is decreased from 20000 tons to 15000 tons

Accordingly, the estimated amount of CO2 emissions averted is reduced from 15000 MM tons to 11000 MM tons

The number of new jobs to be created is reduced from 18 to 13

Funding for a portion of a Better Futures staff person is eliminated and funding for the two remaining positions is reduced

Funds for a box truck are eliminated

Funding for two consultants, focused on marketing and business development, is eliminated

Accordingly, activities and outcomes related to providing business development assistance to at least 10 potential businesses is deleted

Funding for NRRI is reduced by \$2000

Revisions made on March 4, 2021

1) Eliminated Steger Leadership Institute as a partner. The COVID lockdown and restrictions reduced the organization's capacity to provide the level of services planned. The \$151,000 budgeted for the Institute's activities has been reallocated in the following manner: Increased NRRI budget from \$166,000 to \$201,000 to generate economic and social impact reports along with environmental impact statements; and, Better Futures' budget is increased by \$116,000 to cover partial costs for one new position and a funding increases for two existing.

The new position is a social media and communications coordinator to disseminate the stories, results, and impact of this project statewide. This person will also coordinate the promotion of online and place-based retail sales. \$47,800 is budgeted to cover .6FT of this position. Increased funding of \$43,150 is provided for the retail sales manager position, \$30,000 to \$73,150. This increases the retail sales person time from .6FT to 1.0 FT.

Additional funding of \$25,050 is also provided for the business manager, \$65,000 to \$90,050. The portion of the business manager's time changes from .6FT to .8FT.

2) New activities are added to reflect the additional analyses being completed by the NRRI and their consultant Ecotone Partners.

3) New activities are added related to online sales, social media marketing and dissemination of news about the project.

4) The increased hours for the Better Futures business manager and the addition of time for Better Futures' social media and communications coordinator will enable the partners to complete the activities originally assigned to the Steger Institute.

5) Minor revisions were also made to the plan to clarify and/or provide greater detail about a particular activity or expected result.

Revisions made May 14, 2021

1) The description for the Equipment line in the Budget was revised to include the word "purchase and/or" rental of steel containers. In some cases, purchasing a container may be more cost effective. Usually, container cost less than \$2000

2) Travel costs were broken out into four categories and detailed expense back up provided for each category

3) A new visual component was downloaded

4) Attachments were rearranged and placed in the appropriate section

5) A new milestone was added to Activity One; a final impact report summarizing the amount of emissions averted; the amount of waste diverted and the number of jobs created will be produced at the end of the grant period.

6) Two job titles were changed. The 'social media and communications coordinator' was changed to "Development Director"; the "Business Manager" was changed to "VP for Enterprise Services". The expense allocation for each position remains the same. The duties and responsibilities for each position has not changed.

7) A COA was prepared and uploaded in the Optional Attachments section.

8) The capital expenditure budget item was edited, the box "generally ineligible" was checked

Revisions made June 2, 2021

As requested by the LCCMR staff, the statement concerning reinvestment of net revenue from this project was revised to clarify any net revenue will only be used to pay for eligible expenses directly related to this project.

Revisions made July 12, 2021

The budgeted funds for the Vice President for Enterprise Services was reduced by \$47,880 to \$42,170.

The \$47,880 was reallocated to three expense items:

\$32,880 is proposed for a new, generally ineligible expense item, a portion of Better Futures' warehouse rent and utilities. This expense will be incurred as Better Futures launches the activities in this grant, consisting of receiving, processing, repairing, recycling and shipping materials collected from Twin Cities sites. This portion of the warehouse will be used exclusively for the activities outlined in this work plan. A justification for this generally ineligible expense was also inserted.

The expense line for equipment was increased by \$5000 to cover the cost of remote time clocks needed to support new staff at Greater Minnesota locations.

The equipment line was increased by \$10,000 to allow for an increased number of storage containers likely to be needed at job sites and locations in Greater Minnesota.

A note was inserted indicating Steve Thomas will transfer his duties as project manager on 9-30-2021. He will assist with orienting and training the new project manager.

The following note was inserted to clarify how Better Futures intends to use any revenue generated during this project. "As with past LCCMR projects, Better Futures and its partners will reinvest any revenue earned from sales or fees directly into this project. As noted in the project narrative, Better Futures is using the LCCMR funds to launch and test new business activities related to diverting waste from landfills and then reusing, repairing, and repurposing those materials. A key activity is to develop financial models that indicate a realistic path toward long term financial sustainability for these new business activities. Typically, it takes 5 to 7 years for a new business such as these to reach a financial breakeven point. Accordingly, any revenue from sales of items or fees for services will be used to offset direct operating costs not covered by this grant. In addition, Better Futures will use revenue from other contracts and philanthropic sources to cover the expected operating gap over the first two years.

July 13, 2021

The project completion date was changed from June 30, 2023 to July 31, 2023. Activities with June 30, 2023 completion dates were also changed to July 31, 2023.

August 5, 2021

Revised language related to request to reinvest any earned income was inserted after review and approval of LCCMR staff

Proposed funding for warehouse space was deleted and reallocated to VP for Business Services

Funding for contracted project manager was reduced to reflect 9-30-21 end date for this contract; remaining funds allocated to personnel budget to cover expense of Better Futures staff person assuming this role

Travel costs for LCCMR-funded vehicle and vehicles not funded by the LCCMR was revised



## Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

**Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?**

Yes

**Do you agree travel expenses must follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?**

Yes

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

Yes

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF? If so, describe here (1) the source and estimated amounts of any revenue and (2) how you propose to use those revenues:**

Yes, We are requesting to reinvest revenue now and, in the future, as described here. This project is expected to generate a modest level of earned income over its first two years. The earned income is expected from three core activities: 1) the sale of used goods and materials diverted from transfer stations and collected from curb side pickups; 2) collection fees paid by customers for curbside pickup services; and 3) proceeds from selling products made from reclaimed materials. The total projected amount of earned income is \$350,000. No net revenue is expected to be realized during this project. Typically, it takes 5 to 7 years for a project of this size and scope to breakeven financially. This LCCMR grant is a valuable source of startup funding. The LCCMR grant combined with other grant funds, earned revenue, and a substantial investment of in-kind support from Better Futures and its partners will help build a path towards financial sustainability.

As noted in the Non-ENRTF funds section of this work plan, a substantial amount of in-kind support is expected to be committed by Better Futures and at least three county partners. Any earned income will be reinvested directly into this project and be used to offset a portion of these type of project costs (not covered by the LCCMR grant). These types of costs include front line staff time (who will work with employees funded with the LCCMR funds), workspace and utility costs, equipment and maintenance of equipment, fees for disposal of materials not reused or recycled, life coaching, counseling, and housing supports for workers, insurance, and general administrative expenses related to management, fund development, supervision, training, and payroll and accounting expenses.

Any revenue generated from the sale of the vehicle(s) purchased with ENRTF funds is exempted from this revenue reinvestment plan. As certified in the budget portion of the workplan, that asset will continue to be used for the same program through its useful life, or, if the use changes, Better Futures will pay back the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund an amount equal to either the cash value received or a residual value approved by the LCCMR director if it is sold. The vehicle will be tagged as an asset purchased under this award and records kept accordingly of this use and payback requirement.

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

## Work Plan Amendments

Amendment ID	Request Type	Changes made on the following pages	Explanation & justification for Amendment Request (word limit 75)	Date Submitted	Approved	Date of LCCMR Action
1	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts</li> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> <li>• Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</li> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> </ul>	The budget amendment is to better align the budget with project outcomes. The Contracts and Services Section is being amended because Steve Thomas is no longer under contract. We adjusted Equipment, Tools, and supplies to have greater flexibility and better efficiencies of dollars spent. Personnel section is being amended to align with the work that is taking place, and positions to be filled. The Travel section was amended to reflect more accurate assumptions.	June 21, 2022	Yes	June 22, 2022
2	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> </ul>	Removed the budget line item for meals and travel in the Twin Cities because it was not in alignment with the Commissioner's Plan. The role of the Sales Manager was added retroactively to the approved June 6, 2022 amendment because it was not included in the originally submitted budget for the project, and this work has been taking place since the beginning of the project	July 14, 2022	Yes	July 19, 2022
3	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> <li>• Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</li> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> </ul>	This amendment is to correctly reflect the total wages of the Waste Diversion Manager. The initial amount budgeted was adjusted during the hiring process. There will be no reduction in the project's outcomes as a result of making this change. This amendment is also to correct a clerical error that was made in the previous amendment request July 14, 2022. It was the role of the Appliance Manager that was added not the Sales Manager	October 10, 2022	Yes	October 10, 2022

4	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 07/31/2023 New Completion Date: 03/31/2024	Our project start was delayed due to a delay in getting the project agreement signed and because of internal personnel changes. We are seeking to have our project completion date more inline with amended appropriation end date to make sure that we utilize all of the funds allocated for our project, and that we are better positioned to objectives.	May 25, 2023	Yes	June 9, 2023
5	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> <li>• Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</li> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> </ul>	This amendment will align our budget with our project end date. At our current rate funding for supervisor positions would run out before the project completion, and would not exhaust our worker budget. The adjustments made to the personnel budget along with reducing Equipment Rental and Travel Mileage will fund each position until the project end date and allow for more work to be performed.	August 8, 2023	Yes	August 9, 2023
6	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 03/31/2024 New Completion Date: 06/30/2024	Our sub-award NRRI will not be able to fully exhaust the funds allocated to them until the end of the appropriation.	August 8, 2023	Yes	August 9, 2023
7	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other</li> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> <li>• Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</li> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> </ul>	This amendment like our previous amendment submitted 08/08/2023 is to better align our project budget with our project end date. Monies were reallocated from 4 line items in the Personnel Section as well as Tools and Equipment, and Travel to the Crew Member line item. This will allow us to draw down on the remaining funds by the project completion. The travel section was also amended to address a negative line item balance.	May 22, 2024	Yes	June 3, 2024
8	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 06/30/2024 New Completion Date: 12/31/2024	LCCMR Staff system work around to address June 2024 Update and Final Update Due conundrum.	June 3, 2024	Yes	June 3, 2024
9	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 12/31/2024 New Completion Date: 06/30/2024	LCCMR Staff system work around to address June 2024 Update and Final	June 3, 2024	Yes	June 3, 2024



			Update Due conundrum. To get system back on correct timeline for final reporting.			
10	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other</li> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> <li>• Budget - Professional / Technical Contracts</li> <li>• Budget - Capital, Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</li> <li>• Budget - Travel and Conferences</li> </ul>	This amendment like our amendment submitted 06/03/2024 is to better align our project budget to be exhausted at the end of the appropriation. The budget modification also address a negative line item that was not rectified in the previous amendment.	June 25, 2024	Yes	July 1, 2024

# Status Update Reporting

## Final Status Update August 14, 2024

**Date Submitted:** October 23, 2024

**Date Approved:** October 23, 2024

### Overall Update

Looking to disrupt the straight into the landfill pattern of a linear economy; manufacturing, consuming, and the disposing of products, Better Futures Minnesota (BFM) and partners embarked on an ambitious plan to divert 15,000 tons of materials from Minnesota's waste stream. The project focused on the concepts of circular economy with the development of sustainable practices for diverting materials, and to demonstrate the viability of alternative business and operating models that could extend the life cycle of the materials diverted through reuse, re-purposing, restoration and recycling. Five strategies were employed, waste diversion reuse sales at transfer stations, curbside collection services, municipal collection events, deconstruction, and material donation.

BFM established operating agreements with three landfills and during the project period over 210,000 pounds of materials were diverted, the project proved that people are willing purchase items that were removed from the landfill. Curbside collection services afforded greater access and increased participation for Minnesotans to make environmentally responsible choices with material they no longer wanted. By diverting material from the waste stream, this project contributed to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (CO2) benefiting Minnesota's Air, land, and water quality.

### Activity 1

Beginning as a pilot project in 2019 BFM partnered with Becker County to test a viable alternative to burying waste that is generated and create a reuse market for material reclaimed from the Solid Waste campus. By extending the life of reusable items and keeping them from entering the waste stream, would reduce the negative health, financial, and environmental impacts associated with landfill use.

Since the beginning of the pilot project, there has been a shift in behavior patterns, County residents now purposely bring items to the Transfer Station to donate with the intent that those items be reused instead of ending up in the landfill. In 2022 the reuse operation went from quarterly pop-up sales to regular weekly sales hours and employing two fulltime Better Futures employees. 2023 showed continued growth in Becker County with 3,516 customers making purchases of 16,006 items diverted from the waste stream for a total of 33.71 tons.

Based on the success that was realized in Becker County two additional landfills Dodge County and Cambridge joined the project to start reuse operations at their respective facilities. We anticipate adding more transfer stations that want to start reuse operations

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 2

Employing the concepts of circular economy as a sustainable alternative to the straight into the landfill linear economy that Minnesotans have become accustomed to. The aim of the project was to extract as much value from materials before disposing of them through reuse, repurposing, repairing, or recycling thus minimizing the waste we create.

NRRI conducted community competitions, that showcased innovative reuse and repurposing ideas such as transforming cabinets into a bench with hidden storage, restoring metal outdoor furniture with reclaimed wood, a mosaic tabletop made from broken ceramic tile, a bed frame made of deconstructed pallet wood, and a mattress spring for a flower wall.

BFM partnered with Becker County to develop a mattress recycling operation. NRRI instructed the team on challenges they may encounter and connected them with members of Minnesota's recycling industry for further reuse outlets. Ideas tested for reclaimed materials included transient and pet bedding, storm water filtration, and direct feed metal recycling.

12 prototypes were created from diverted and reclaimed materials, including side and cocktail tables made from reclaimed lumber and repurposed institutional metal furniture, a tray table using reclaimed appliance glass, and wall art that showcases new growth versus old growth wood harvested during building  
*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### **Activity 3**

Starting as a pilot with 4,000 Bloomington households (approximately 25%) in November 2022, Citywide in June of 2023. January through May of 2023 1,568 items weighing 6 tons were collected with an average of 1 ton per month. June through December the average increased to over 9 tons per month with 58 tons of material being collected in that period. 200 pieces of furniture and 62 mattresses were donated to Bridging, an organization that serves people in need. Mattresses that were not accepted by Bridging were brought to the social enterprise Second Chance Recycling to keep the recyclable material out of the landfill. In the three-month period of Sep-Nov 2022 600 tons of yard waste was diverted for composting in the City of Columbia Heights.

The services provided to Bloomington and Columbia Heights residents provide access and increase participation. Not all residents have the resources to transport these items that they want to donate or dispose of in an environmentally responsible way to municipal collection events or to organizations like Better Futures that accept building materials as donations. During the project period 123 residential and commercial pickups occurred throughout the Twin Cities Metro Area totaling 114,945 pounds.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### **Activity 4**

To help develop a market for the materials diverted during the project beyond reuse sales outlets, the partners set out to assist with the development of two new businesses that could use the materials as part of their value chain. The partners identified and worked with two aspiring business owners. The first was a local artist who was looking to start a business selling art pieces that were made using reclaimed lumber and using urban wood salvaged from tree removal operations in Twin Cities Metro Area due to death, disease, development or other causes. In addition to providing technical support BFM sold the artist material steeply discounted, so he had sufficient material to create his pieces. We introduced him to Wood from The Hood to get scrap material from them to be used in his pieces.

The second came from a referral to BFM and the project partners. The business owner operates a furniture restoration business out of her garage. We provided the business owner with upholstered furniture that was collected from Bloomington curbside collection that was not accepted by Bridging. The business owners received technical assistance with completing the grant application for the MPCA's grant funding for reuse businesses.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### **Dissemination**

Information regarding this project, lessons learned, and highlighting the importance of material diversion has been shared broadly throughout the grant period. The partners routinely shared stories and provided updates highlighting project activities and the work performed at multiple presentations at local, national conferences, and green environment events listed below:

2022 - Q1 2022 MN Built Environment meeting, Reuse Minnesota's Reuse22 Conference, multiple statewide MPCA Quarterly Conferences.

2023 - The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Recycling Committee's - May Meeting: Innovative Bulk Material Collection Programs, Reuse Minnesota's Reuse23 Conference, BFM was highlighted on WCCO for our involvement with Hennepin County's Salvage Crawl.

2024 - SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) / AWMA (Air&Waste Management Association) Regional Meeting, Northwest & Central Regional Landfill Operators meeting in Park Rapids, St. Louis County Waste Hauler and Landfill Operators Continuing Education meeting in Duluth 3/28/24, RAM Recycling Association of Minnesota / SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) Minnesota Conference

# Additional Status Update Reporting

## Additional Status Update August 14, 2024

**Date Submitted:** May 22, 2024

**Date Approved:** June 3, 2024

### **Overall Update**

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic this is place holder text for final update to be submitted in August 2024

### **Activity 1**

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic this is place holder text for final update to be submitted in August 2024  
*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### **Activity 2**

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic this is place holder text for final update to be submitted in August 2024  
*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### **Activity 3**

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic this is place holder text for final update to be submitted in August 2024  
*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### **Activity 4**

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic this is place holder text for final update to be submitted in August 2024  
*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### **Dissemination**

Per LCCMR staff guidance, due to system logic this is place holder text for final update to be submitted in August 2024

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update June 1, 2024

**Date Submitted:** May 22, 2024

**Date Approved:** June 3, 2024

### Overall Update

BFM and partners are engaged in dialogue with four new counties to perform collection and reuse sales at transfer stations. We met with county staff from Rice County to begin preliminary discussion on deconstruction, transfer station collection and workforce development with criminal justice individuals south of the Metro Area.

We are still in discussions with Dakota County and their four largest cities (Apple Valley, Eagan, Burnsville, and Lakeville) to provide waste diversion services in those cities. We completed a deconstruction project on a City owned property in Eagan which is a step in the right direction to expand the waste diversion solutions in the South Metro.

We held the first organized collection events of the year with the Cities of Orono, Minnetrista and Mound. We will be holding our first ever event in Minnetonka on June 1st.

BFM along with partners presented at four solid waste meetings and conferences which have brought more attention the this project and will serve as a spring board on the next phase of the project.

### Activity 1

Better Futures recently completed a deconstruction project in Detroit Lakes. The materials from the project transported to the ReUse Retail store located at the Becker County Transfer Station where approximately 40% of the harvested material was sold in a special weekend sales event that was marketed along with the promotion of the deconstruction project.

We entered into operating agreements with two new transfer stations and have hired a staffer at one of the two locations are looking to staff the second.

Ecotone Partners is currently working on the performance and environmental impact report for the first quarter of 2024 that will highlight the reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 2

Better Futures has partnered with two local artisans to use materials collected through our waste diversion activities. One of the projects that they are working on is the repurposing of upholstered furniture that is collected during the Bulky Item Collection service in Bloomington that Bridging does not except. Prior to this work those items were taken to Second Chance recycling to be recycled or would end up being landfilled.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 3

The Bulky Item Curbside Collection service is continuing to prove popular and successful. The City of Bloomington exercised the first of three possible extensions to extend the multi-year agreement through 2025. From December 2023 thru April 2024 572 items totaling 26 tons have been collected and diverted from the waste stream. Of those items 95 were brought to the Better Futures ReUse Warehouse for sale. 70 items were donated to Bridging to help support individuals and families in need, while the remaining 407 items were recycled.

Better Futures Minnesota participated in two Spring Municipal Collection Cleanup events with the Cities of Orono and Minnetrista/Mound. A total of 378 items collected for reuse from those events, totaling 8,814lbs (4.40 tons). Better Futures Minnesota will be participating in two more Spring Cleanup events.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

#### **Activity 4**

As last reported Better Futures Minnesota has begun to provide technical assistance to a local artist who makes and sells art made from reclaimed lumber. The technical assistance being provided currently is with the development of their business plan.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

#### **Dissemination**

Key partners have discussed the scope of the project and the development of our waste diversion activities, and curbside collection, at green environment events. The partners continue to leverage the success of our waste diversion efforts in Becker County to help influence other counties to consider becoming partners of the project. The partners use these platforms to bring further visibility to the project. Presentations highlighting the project are listed below:

Waste Diversion presentation with NRRRI outlining our project given at the SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) / AWMA (Air&Waste Management Association) Regional Meeting in St. Cloud 2/21/24

Waste Diversion presentation outlining our project given at the Northwest & Central Regional Landfill Operators meeting in Park Rapids 2/29/24

Waste Diversion presentation outlining our project given at the St. Louis County Waste Hauler and Landfill Operators Continuing Education meeting in Duluth 3/28/24

Bloomington Bulky Item Curbside Collection presentation outlining our partnership with the City of Bloomington to provide curbside collection to the residents of the City of Bloomington given at the RAM Recycling Association of Minnesota / SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) Minnesota Conference

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update December 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** December 8, 2023

**Date Approved:** December 11, 2023

### Overall Update

BFM and partners made progress in expanding the three strategies of our overall waste diversion efforts. We engaged in dialogue with seven counties to perform collection and reuse sales at transfer stations. We met with the counties that make up the East Central consortium (Isanti, Chisago, Pine, Kanabec, and Milacs). We also met Pope Douglas and Hubbard Counties. We are hoping to have formal agreements in place with one to two of the counties by Q2 of 2024. Dodge County held their first reuse sales event of items diverted from their transfer station.

We met with Dakota County and their four largest cities (Apple Valley, Eagan, Burnsville, and Lakeville) to discuss providing curbside collection services to their residents.

We held our second organized collection events of the year with the Cities of St. Louis Park and Orono. We held our first organized collection event with the City of Brooklyn Park.

BFM along with the City of Bloomington presented at the Reuse Minnesota Conference on the curbside Bulky Material Collection program. We have been asked to give the same presentation at the RAM/SWANA Conference 2024 in April. We have identified a possible reuse business startup to assist.

### Activity 1

As previously stated, Dodge County conducted its first reuse sales event from items that had been diverted from the landfill. They recorded 800lbs of materials diverted. The actual weight is somewhat higher than that because they have agreed to donate some of their reclaimed material to their local Habitat for Humanity Restore. They received great feedback from residents and are looking forward to building on the success of their first event.

We are starting to gain more interest from cities and counties willing to explore the three strategies of waste diversion that we are employing. What we are finding is that for some its funding and or budget issue and the time is not right. While for others it is gaining buy-in from local stakeholders.

Since our last reporting we hired our second full-time employee at the Becker County Transfer Station. That staffer splits their time between reuse sales and mattress recycling. Becker County is currently working on creating an end market for the recycled mattress materials.

Ecotone Partners is currently working on the six-month performance and environmental impact report for the second half of 2023 that will highlight the reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

### Activity 2

Better Futures Minnesota has partnered in a project within the University of Minnesota system to source and supply materials to divert from the waste stream. We picked up 2.5 tons of material from M Fairview Health through that relationship. Through our Bulky Item Curbside Collection partnership with The City of Bloomington we have engaged two additional partners for items collected from residents that we do not sell in our ReUse Warehouse we donate to Bridging a non-profit that serves families in need. We take the mattresses that Bridging does not accept to Emerge Recycling. Like Better Futures Minnesota Emerge Recycling provides workforce development to men who have had criminal justice involvement and have been previously incarcerated.

In addition to the three prototypes that NRRI had developed as of our last reporting. They have developed a table using reclaimed lumber, and metal legs fabricated from bed frames that were previously in a building at the Hennepin County



Workhouse that Better Futures Minnesota partially deconstructed.

Better Futures Minnesota is working on two mobile butcher block tables that are made from tabletops reclaimed from the old Saji-ya restaurant in St. Paul and metal legs fashioned from deck railing from a deconstruction project.

### **Activity 3**

The Bulky Item Curbside Collection service was successfully rolled out citywide this past June. Based on the success and popularity of the program we are working with the City of Blooming to exercise the first of three possible extensions to extend the multi-year agreement through 2025.

Better Futures Minnesota participated in three Fall cleanup events with the Cities of Brooklyn Park, Orono and St. Louis Park. We collected a total of 562 items for reuse from those events, totaling 13,354lbs (6.67 tons). Better Futures Minnesota is already in the planning stage with four cities for Spring Cleanup events in 2024.

### **Activity 4**

Better Futures Minnesota has met with a local artist who is looking to start a business selling art that has been made from reclaimed lumber. In addition to providing technical support we are offering him material at a steeply discounted rate to help with his ability to have material to create his pieces. We have also introduced him to Wood from the Hood to get scrap material from them to be used in his pieces.

### **Dissemination**

As previously stated, Better Futures Minnesota presented at the Reuse Minnesota 2023 Conference which allowed us to showcase the work that we are doing in Minnesota to its members. We were able to state our two-year objective to divert 15,000 tons of materials from Minnesota's landfills.

Key partners have discussed the scope of the project and the development of our waste diversion activities, and curbside collection, at green environment events. The partners continue to leverage the success of our waste diversion efforts in Becker County to help influence other counties to consider becoming partners of the project. Becker County has used their large social media network to share information about the project. The partners use these platforms to bring further visibility of the project.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update June 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** June 1, 2023

**Date Approved:** June 9, 2023

### Overall Update

BFM entered into a formal agreement with Dodge County to conduct waste diversion operations and is currently looking to hire a full-time employee at the transfer station.

BFM presented at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Recycling Committee's - May Meeting: Innovative Bulk Material Collection Programs. The presentation outlined our partnership with the City of Bloomington to provide curbside collection service to their residents. Bloomington has been selected by the League of Minnesota Cities as one of two winners of the 2023 Sustainable City Award. The award is being presented in part for the curbside pickup of reusable and recyclable items. The winners will be first publicly announced at the League's Annual Conference, to be held in June.

The web-based application that was developed for data collection to assess the environmental impact of waste diversion activity at transfer stations is in the beta phase. At the time of our last update the final quarter diversion numbers were not available. During that period there was 1,204,354 lbs. (602 tons) of material diverted from the State's landfills. The project is showcasing possibilities, examples, and successes of what a sustainable green environment can look like.

### Activity 1

In addition to the agreement with Dodge County to conduct waste diversion operations at the transfer station. Better Futures Minnesota has been engaged with Pope/Douglas County to explore ways to partner on waste diversion efforts. Better Futures Minnesota continues to partner with Hennepin County to engage with the cities inside the county for waste diversion opportunities.

Based on the success of the waste diversion efforts and reuse sales at the Becker County Transfer Station, Better Futures Minnesota created another position in Becker County and hopes to have that position filled by July.

Ecotone Partners is currently working on the six-month performance and environmental impact report for the second half of 2022 that will highlight the reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

### Activity 2

Becker County is moving forward with mattress recycling and will be contracting Better Futures Minnesota to staff the recycling operation. The partners have had exploratory conversations to explore the viability of a network for reclaimed materials. Better Futures Minnesota continues to have conversations with potential businesses partners to expand markets for restoring, repurposing, or reusing diverted materials. Better Futures Minnesota met with Keys 4/4 Kids to explore the viability of repurposing or deconstructing donated pianos that were not serviceable.

NRRI has developed three prototypes from material reclaimed that can be sourced from a typical deconstruction project. Better Futures Minnesota continues to fulfill orders for the slatted bench designed in-house made from reclaimed lumber.

### Activity 3

The multi-year agreement Better Futures Minnesota entered into with the City of Bloomington began in November with a pilot of sampling of 20% of the households that can participate in program. In the first six months we collected over 10

tons of material. We have partnered with Bridging to take in household items that Better Futures Minnesota does not accept at our ReUse Warehouse. The service will roll out citywide on June 5th. Better Futures is continuing talks with the City of St. Louis Park to provide similar services to their residents.

Better Futures Minnesota participated in a Spring cleanup day with the City of Orono. We collected 136 items for reuse, totaling 3,871lbs (1.93 tons). Better Futures Minnesota has agreed to participate in a similar event with the City of St. Louis Park in the Fall.

#### **Activity 4**

Better Futures has focused on the restoration, and manufacturing of household items made from reclaimed items. As previously stated, the slatted wood bench that was developed in-house by a Better Futures team member has shown that there is an appetite for items made from reclaimed building materials. The benches that have been manufactured by Better Futures have been sold in our ReUse Warehouse as well as online. The partners are still actively looking for private individuals/partners to organize and launch new businesses. We have had preliminary discussions with a couple of potential businesses start-ups but nothing formal has been established at this point.

#### **Dissemination**

As previously stated, Better Futures Minnesota presented at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Recycling Committee's - May Meeting: Innovative Bulk Material Collection Programs. Which allowed us to showcase the work that we are doing in Minnesota to a group of cities on the East Coast. Better Futures Minnesota was highlighted on WCCO for our involvement with Hennepin County's Salvage Crawl. We were able to state our two-year objective to divert 15,000 tons of materials from Minnesota's landfills.

Key partners have discussed the scope of the project and the development of our waste diversion activities, and curbside collection, at green environment events. The partners continue to leverage the success of our waste diversion efforts in Becker County to help influence other counties to consider becoming partners of the project. Becker County has used their large social media network to share information about the project. The partners use these platforms to bring further visibility of the project.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update December 1, 2022

**Date Submitted:** December 1, 2022

**Date Approved:** December 6, 2022

### Overall Update

The project partners presented at the Reuse22 Conference and the Quarterly MN Built Environment meeting to bring further visibility of the project. Better Futures partnered with Hennepin County to partially deconstruct three floors of the former Thrivent Financial Building. The purpose of the project was to reduce the amount of Construction and Demolition waste by reclaiming the remaining office furnishings. There was a total of 51,000 square feet of office space. The project was able to divert 144,420 lbs. (72.21 tons) of materials from the landfill, which is in alignment with the County's Zero Waste initiatives. The application developers that were contracted for the web-based application that will be used for data collection purposes have created a minimal viable product and will begin field testing the application. Better Futures went to Dodge County to discuss the possibility of them becoming a partner and how we could help them create a reuse sales operation.

### Activity 1

Becker County and Better Futures finalized a formal operating agreement that will allow a Better Future employee to work at the Becker County Transfer Station. Better Futures has one full time employee at the Becker County Transfer Station. Based on the success of those waste diversion activities Better Futures is looking to create another position in Becker County. Ecotone Analytics is continuing to collect material diversion data for entry into the Green House Gas (GHG) reporting tool. In addition to the conversations with Dodge County, Better Futures has been in discussion with Otter Tail County and others to explore the possibility of creating additional partnerships.

### Activity 2

Partner meetings have been held to discuss viable methods for restoring, repurposing and the reuse of diverted materials. NRRI along with Better Futures has begun to work on prototypes from material reclaimed deconstruction projects, along with items from material pickups. Better Futures developed a slatted bench made from reclaimed lumber and has fulfilled 23 orders for the bench. The bench will be featured in Reuse Minnesota's reclaimed holiday catalog. Becker County staff is continuing to research viable methods for mattress recycling. Better Futures staff has begun to have conversations with potential businesses partners to expand markets for restoring, repurposing, or reusing diverted materials.

### Activity 3

Better Futures participated in fall cleanup day with the City of St. Louis Park. We collected 20 construction and demolition items totaling 1,385lbs (0.69 tons), and 119 appliances for recycling totaling 7,493lbs (3.75 tons). Based on that event as well as our recently launched curbside collection services, Better Futures has been in discussions with City of Burnsville to explore ways to partner for waste diversion activities in that city. Better Futures is continuing to actively work to develop potential partnerships with other public and non-profit agencies to divert material for restoration, repurposing, and reuse. Better Futures has hired crew members and supervisors for waste diversion activities. Better Futures entered into agreements with to municipalities for curbside collection. The first was a three-month project with the City of Columbia Heights and the other a multi-year contract with the City of Bloomington. Based on that contract Better Futures has had preliminary conversations with the cities of Burnsville and St. Louis Park to provide similar services.

### Activity 4

Bettters Futures has launched a new business line that focuses on the restoration, and manufacturing of household items

made from reclaimed items. As mentioned in the update for Activity 2, the first item that is being manufactured is a slatted wood bench that was developed in house by a Better Futures team member. As previously reported in the last project update this business line will create a new revenue stream for Better Futures. Better Futures created two new FTE's (Full Time Employees), and on the job training opportunities for Better Future's participants. The benches that have been manufactured by Better Futures have been sold in our ReUse Warehouse as well as online. The partners are actively looking for private individuals/partners to organize and launch new businesses.

### **Dissemination**

As previously stated, Better Futures participated in the Reuse22 conference, the quarterly MN Built Environment meeting, as well as statewide MPCA quarterly conferences where key partners have discussed the scope of the project and the development of the waste diversion activities, and curbside collection. The partners continue to leverage the success of our waste diversion efforts in Becker County to help influence other counties to consider becoming partners of the project. Becker County has used their large social media network to share information about the project. Ecotone Partners is working on a report for impact of the project thus far. The partners use these platforms to bring further visibility of the project

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update June 1, 2022

**Date Submitted:** June 21, 2022

**Date Approved:** June 22, 2022

### Overall Update

The project partners have participated in virtual events to understand regional sustainability efforts and to discuss emerging technologies for reuse and circular economy. Becker County has been participating with Better Futures since August 1, 2021, and through developed landfill diversion practices have diverted a combined total of 324.5 tons of material from entering landfills. Better Futures harvested 25923.5 lbs. (12.96 tons) of reusable material from a deconstruction project at Carleton College April 2022. NRRI met with staff and toured the Becker County Transfer Station to observe the operational practice. NRRI began research January 1, 2022, to identify and understand the materials being diverted and collected at the partner locations in Minneapolis and Detroit Lakes. An assessment for environmental impact of the data collected is currently underway. The partners have held meetings with software developers for the development of the web-based application that will be used for data collection purposes. Better Futures went to Becker County in March to network and create partner relationships employers and organizations to further our efforts in the area.

### Activity 1

Becker County and Better Futures are finalizing a formal operating agreement that will allow a Better Future employee to work at the Becker County Transfer Station. Better Futures has posted job openings to hire staff to assist with land fill diversion and sales at the Becker County Transfer Station. Better Futures is looking to leverage Becker County's involvement in the Minnesota Department of Corrections program, Institution Community Work Crews (ICWC) to tap into the workforce that are involved with the ICWC program. In April, NRRI officially started work with Ecotone Analytics to collect material diversion data for entry into a Green House Gas (GHG) reporting tool. Project partners held an initial meeting with Ecotone developers to create an improved data entry tool, introduce them to the material diversion process, and help them to understand the data collection requirements. Ecotone also started reviewing and refining past deconstruction data for use in the new dataset creating a foundation for the work ahead.

### Activity 2

Partner meetings have been held to discuss viable methods for restoring, repurposing and the reuse of diverted materials. NRRI along with Better Futures has begun to work on prototypes from material reclaimed deconstruction projects, along with items from material pickups. NRRI staff has begun to research locations to divert materials, including carpet and furniture goods, from the landfill. Becker County staff has begun researching reuse and recycling methods for mattresses, with the thought of contracting Better Futures staff to perform the work. Better Futures staff has begun work on identifying businesses to partner with for restoring, repurposing, or reusing diverted materials. Better Futures has been working on expanding online sales of reclaimed materials, along with social media presence.

### Activity 3

Better Futures has begun to use the box truck purchased with LCCMR funds to provide pick-up services. The household materials obtained through pick up services are tracked along with those received through donations by community members that do not want items that would normally be sent to the landfill. Better Futures has had cursory conversations with the cities of Columbia Heights and Bloomington about curbside pick up service. Better Futures has also had preliminary conversations with the cities of Bloomington and St. Louis Park about participating in collection events to be held at city transfer stations. Better Futures has actively been looking to develop potential partnerships with other public and non-profit agencies to divert material for restoration, repurposing, and reuse. Better Futures is actively looking to hire crew members for waste diversion activities. As outlined in the updated of Activity 1 the partners

and Ecotone Partners have begun to work on web-based application measure the social, economic, and environmental impact/benefits of the waste diversion efforts.

#### **Activity 4**

Bettors Futures is launching a new business line that will focus on the restoration, and manufacturing of household items made from reclaimed items based on the prototypes developed by NRRI in conjunction with Better Futures. This business line will create a new revenue stream for Better Futures, create two new FTE's (Full Time Employees), and on the job training opportunities for Better Future's participants. The products manufactured by Better Futures will be sold on our ReUse Warehouse and online. The partners are actively looking for private individuals/partners to organize and launch new businesses. We have had discovery conversation with a Better Futures participant who has expressed a desire to start a business of his own focused on the use of repurposed and reclaimed materials.

#### **Dissemination**

Better Futures has participated in the statewide MPCA quarterly conferences where key partners have discussed the scope of the project and the development of the waste diversion in Becker County. Discussion held regarding planning for growth in Becker County and how the work there can influence other counties to consider becoming partners of the project. Becker County has used their large social media network to share information about the project. Ecotone Partners will be creating a report for impact of the project thus far. Better Futures participated in two of a three-part panel discussion presented by Rethos on deconstruction. Better Futures used the platform to talk about the project and the benefits of reclaim building materials.