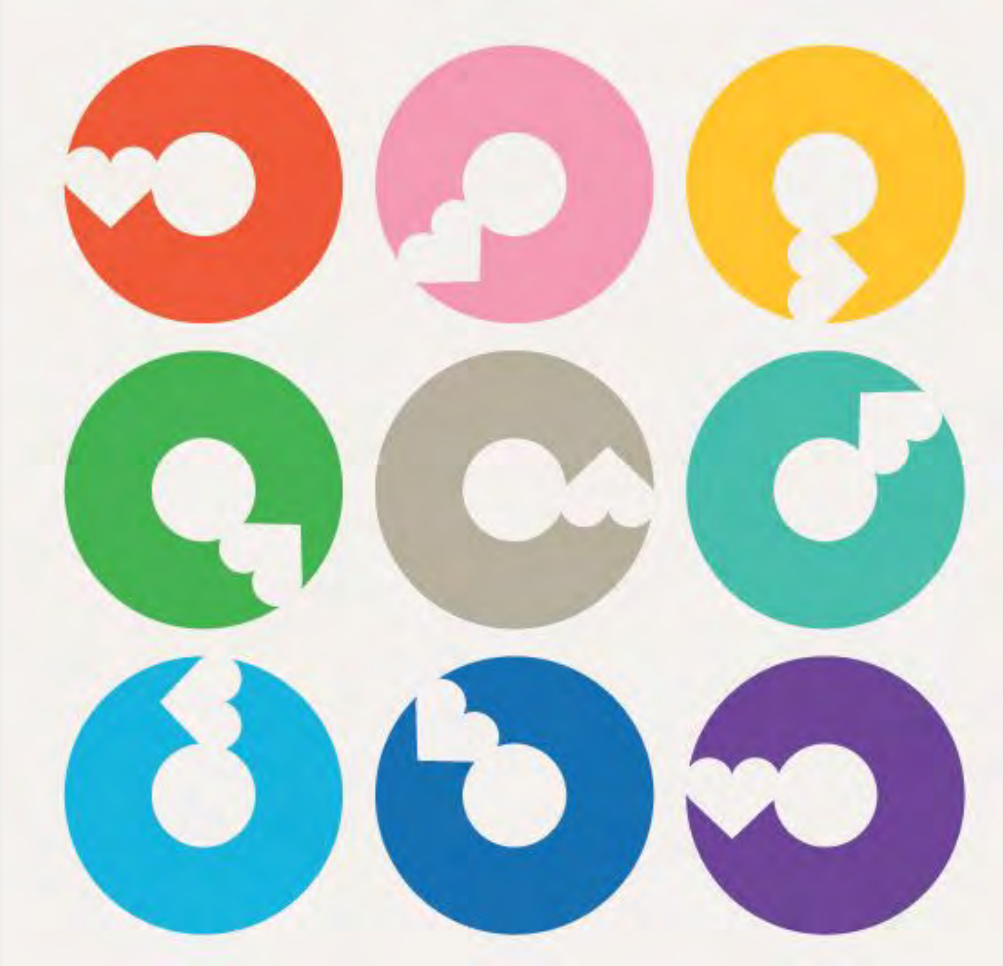
Good Vibrations: Reuse Across Sectors

Crystal Dreisbach, CEO, Upstream

RCA's 2026 Circular Economy Conference · "Catch the Wave" · Oct 22, 2026

Upstream



WE ALREADY KNOW HOW TO DO THIS

Old reuse. New reuse.



Old reuse

Milk delivery • refillables • dine-in



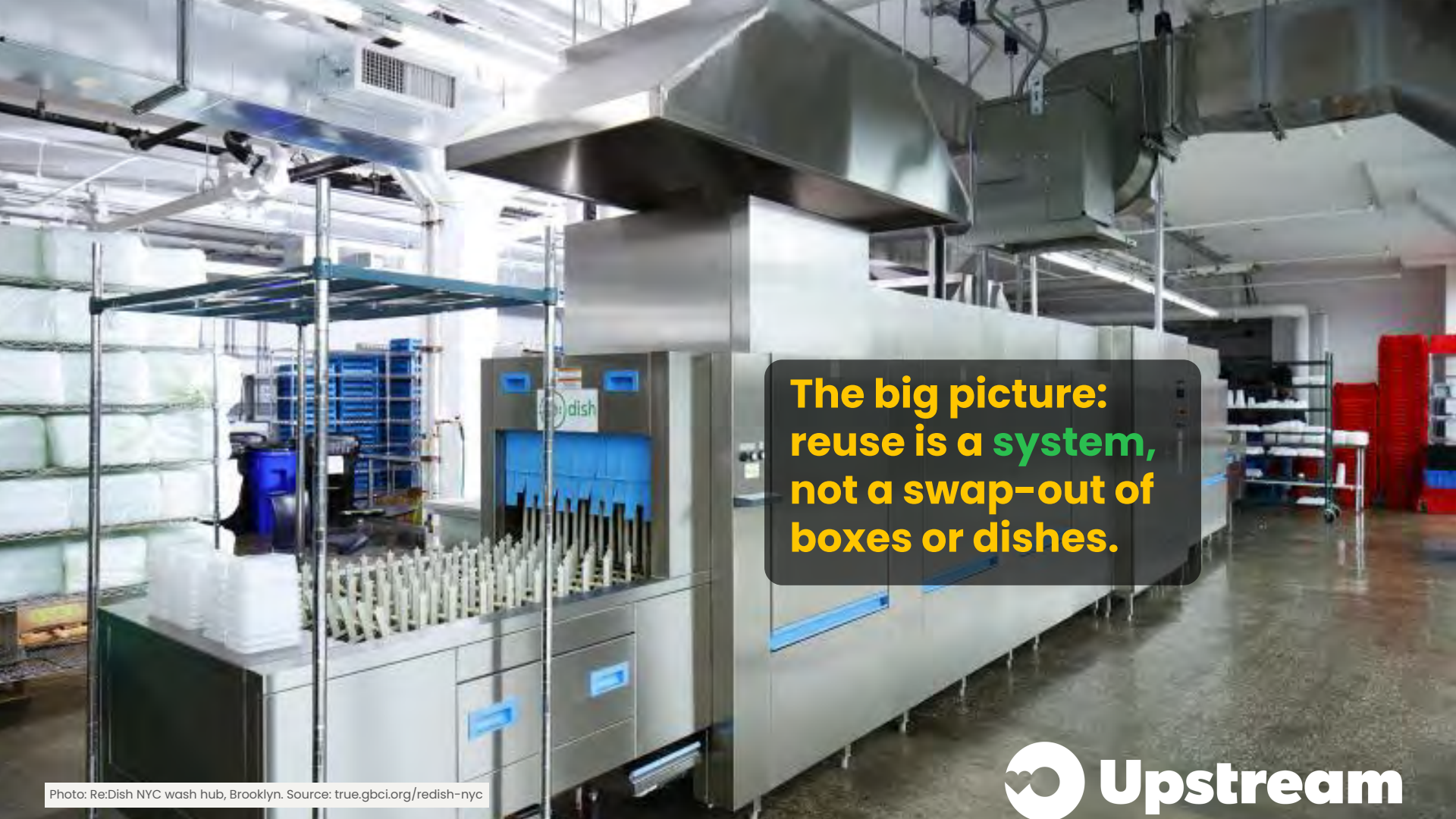
New reuse

Return stations • wash hubs • shared systems

So what happened, and what does the new version need that the old one didn't?

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Photos: Toronto Islands milkman, 1944, The Globe and Mail (public domain), via Wikimedia Commons. Reusable cup return, Petaluma, CA, 2024, Sarah Stierch (CC0), via Wikimedia Commons.



The big picture: reuse is a system, not a swap-out of boxes or dishes.

Photo: Re:Dish NYC wash hub, Brooklyn. Source: true.gbci.org/redish-nyc

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We can't build what we can't picture.
Wir nehmen zurück:
Getränkedosen
PET-Einwegflaschen!
TOMRA
T-820
Upstream

Show, don't tell: study tours

Charlotte, NC saw circular systems in the Netherlands, then invested city money.



Photo: De Ceuvel, Amsterdam. Superbass, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

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Anchor markets: stadiums & arenas, school lunches, large cultural institutions, and corporate cafeterias

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Grand Canyon National Park reuse project

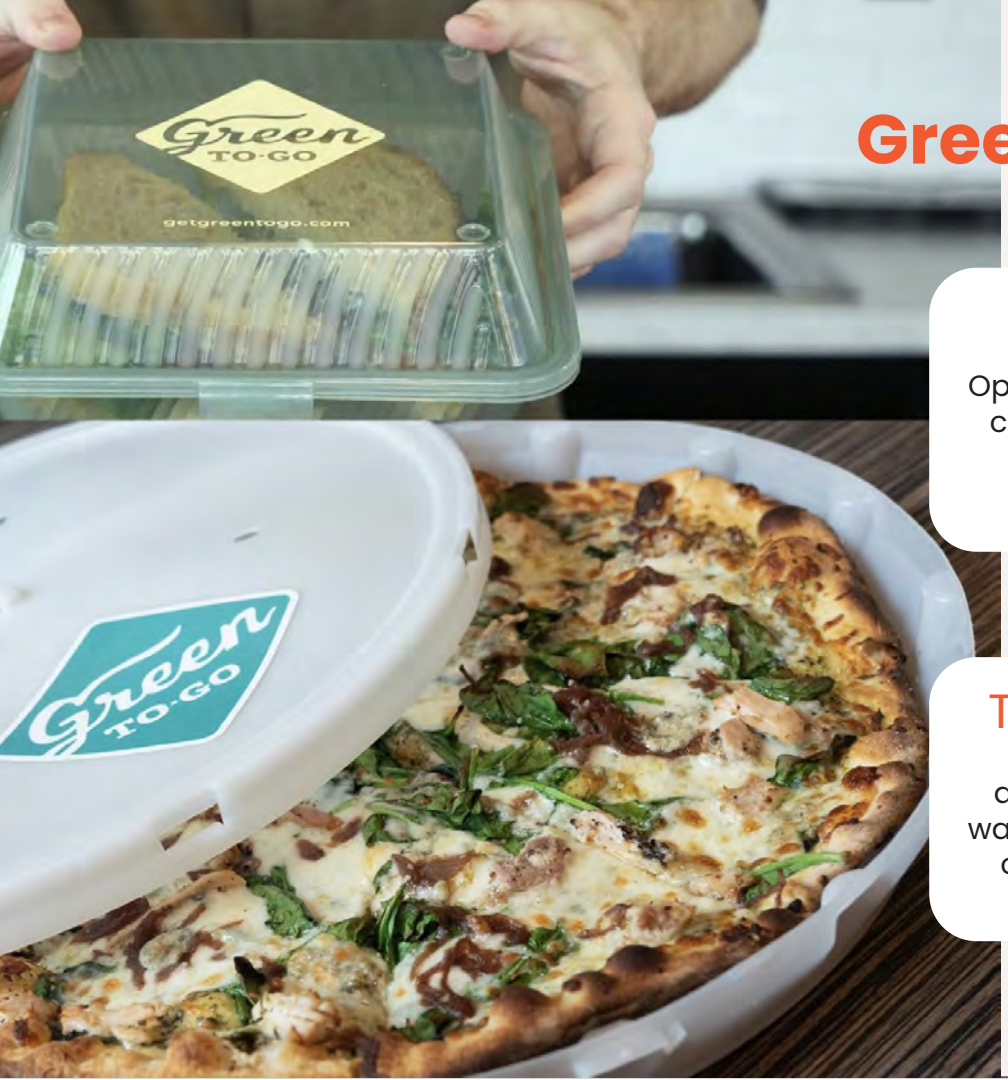
14
food & beverage properties

1
wash hub inside the park

50
return stations

Tourable by design. Breaking ground summer 2027.





GreenToGo: what we learned

The model

Opt-in membership, with check-out through an app people had to download

The money

Restaurants paid $0.25 per container stocked; event and school contracts kept us going, philanthropy filled the gaps

The hard part

Wasn't customer adoption or returns: it was a long sales pipeline of small, time-heavy contracts

What worked

Large, regular accounts close to the wash hub: *volume, frequency, distance*


Seattle's BARA program:
Borrow Anywhere, Return Anywhere
BOLD
REUSE
Upstream

California SB 54 policy tailwind

~$1B for reuse over 5 years

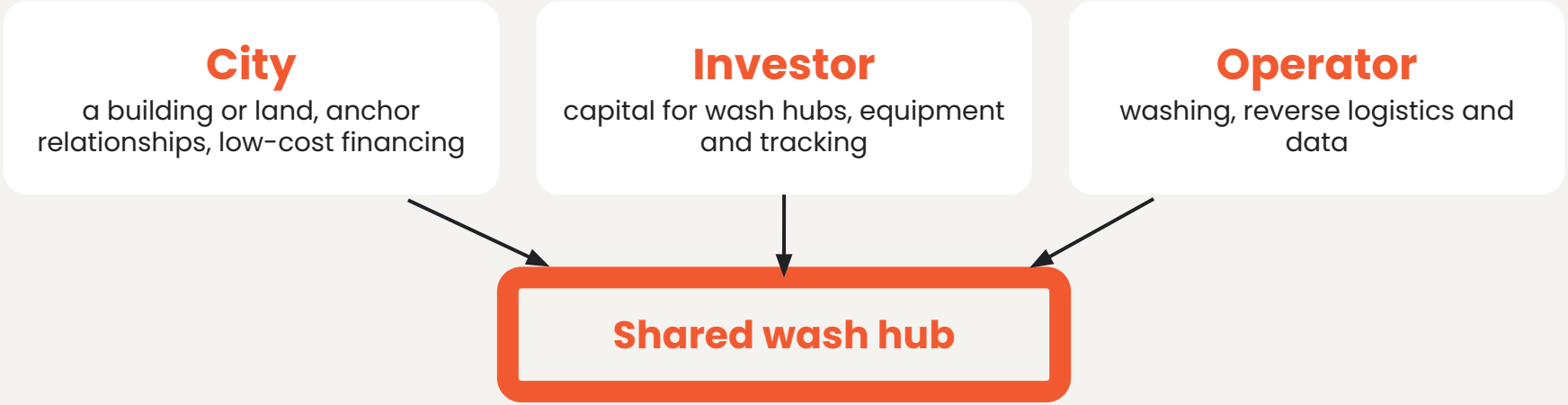
Extended Producer Responsibility

...and we can't wait for it.



Policy creates the conditions. Money makes it real.

Don’t wait: city + investor + operator



Cities already build parking, water utilities, and airport terminals this way.

Local jobs • Local value • Shorter supply chains

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Real talk: what's still hard

Capital
upfront inventory & equipment

Open-loop systems
the hardest model to turn a profit

Public pace
reviews, rates, & permits take years

An uneven field
single-use pushes its costs onto everyone else



QUESTIONS FOR THIS ROOM

What would make reuse the default here?

What's the anchor contract in your community?

Let's catch the wave! 🌊

Crystal Dreisbach, CEO, Upstream

Upstream

