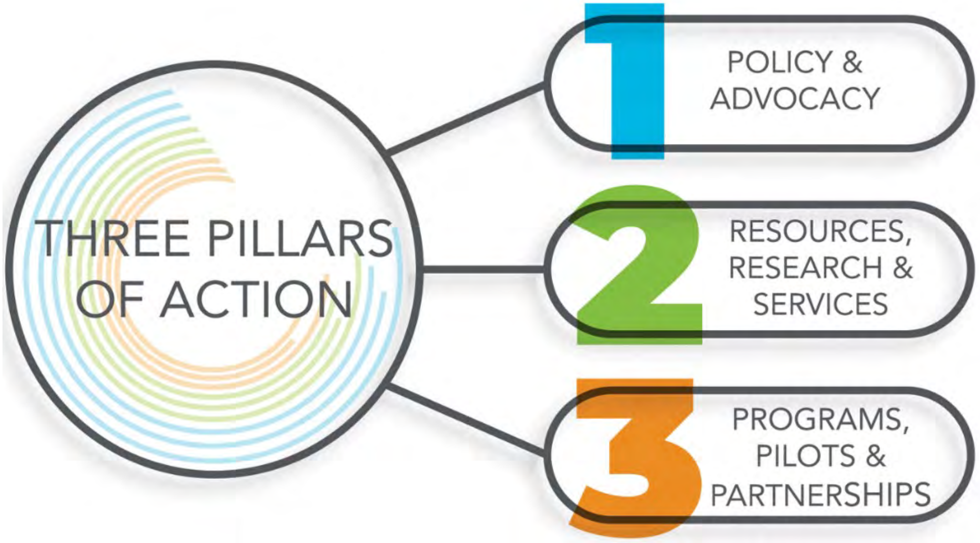
# Pilot Program Model for Improving Food Waste Diversion in the ICI Sector

## Systems solutions for circular end-management of food waste in Canada's Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional Sector

RCA Circular Economy Conference 2025

# ABOUT CIC

- Established as Recycling Council of Ontario in 1978
- Reimagined in 2020 as **Circular Innovation Council** with a broader mandate
- **Vision** To be recognized as a global ambassador for the circular economy in Canada
- **Mission**: To put circular economy concepts into actio
- Established and expanding membership reflecting a wide diversity of sectors and stakeholders



# POLICY & ADVOCACY

CSA GROUP

STANDARDS RESEARCH

Landscape Review of Repairability in Canada

November 2022

Circular Procurement: Strategies for Circular Criteria

Considerations to support the development of circular procurement criteria.

eunomia

CIRCULAR INNOVATION COUNCIL

A Comparative Assessment of Standards and Certification Schemes for Verifying Recycled Content in Plastic Products

Eunomia Research & Consulting with support from Circular Innovation Council

October 19, 2021

scc ccn

Consultation paper: a proposed federal plastics registry for producers of plastic products

Canada

Circular & Fair ICT Pact

# RESOURCES & SERVICES

REGISTER NOW

Making the circular economy the standard:

How standards can help further circularity in the built environment, plastics, agriculture and agri-food

WEBINAR | January 30, 2024 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM (ET)

CSA GROUP

CIRCULAR ECONOMY MONTH

CIRCULAR INNOVATION COUNCIL

Driving the Circular Economy Through Public Procurement

CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN ACTION KNOWLEDGE SERIES

BUILDING CIRCULARITY INTO OUR ECONOMIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

UN environment

CIRCULAR CHRONICLE

CIRCULAR NEWSHUB

# PROGRAMS & PILOTS

COMMERCIAL FOOD WASTE DIVERSION

CIRCULAR ECONOMY MONTH

REUSE OTTAWA

PROCURE 4 CIRCULAR

Advancing Circularity Through The Power Of Procurement

SHARE REUSE REPAIR HUB

PLASTIC ACTION CENTRE

Context

# Introduction to IC&I Food Waste Diversion Challenges

- **Canadian IC&I sector generates ~9-14 million tonnes** of food and organic waste annually
- **IC&I sector often lacks infrastructure, funding, data, and policy supports** for diversion practices - especially challenging for **SMEs to access**.
- **These gaps also challenge local governments and service providers**, limiting their ability to deliver ICI-focused diversion solutions.
- **These system barriers make circular end-management of food and organics diversion practices difficult** for food-generating businesses to adopt at scale.

# Research Insights* – Municipal & ICI Perspectives on Organics Diversion Across Canada

## Key Barriers in System that Limit !C&I Participation

### Financial & Infrastructure Barriers

**Businesses face high costs** for implementing organics diversion practices, with few incentives to adopt costly practices.

**Many regions lack processing infrastructure** for composting or bioenergy - difficult for ICI to divert.

### Regulation & Policy Gaps

**Lack of consistent ICI diversion regulations** or targets from municipal / provincial governments.

**Hinders ICI sector progress** in broad adoption circular end-management practices for organics.

### Governance Fragmentation

**Roles and responsibilities often unclear** or misaligned between government and ICI/industry actors.

**Lack of cross-sector collaboration** for coordinated solutions to improve ICI food & organics diversion.

### Data Measurement & Benchmarking Gaps

**Businesses & service providers do not consistently track diversion data** due to lack of access to tracking systems and reporting incentives.

**Existing data is often siloed or aggregated** & rarely shared with municipalities for benchmarking.

* Circular Innovation Council (2025). *Investigating Barriers, Drivers, and Opportunities that Influence Diversion of Organic Waste in Canada's IC&I Sector*. Research prepared for Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

# Research Insights* – Municipal & ICI Perspectives on Organics Diversion Across Canada

### Improve Businesses' Financial Accessibility

Leverage regional economies of scale to reduce costs and improve businesses' financial access to existing diversion solutions

### Cross-Sector Governance

Enable collaborative program design & implementation shared by local network of organizations, municipality, businesses, and service providers.

### Piloting Scalable Models

Test scalable, place-based models in communities that can be replicated nationally, de-risking actionable circular end-of-life solutions for ICI food waste.

### ICI Diversion Data Tracking

Build data tracking into interventions and policy; can be extrapolated regionally to inform municipal regulations and infrastructure planning for material recovery.

**System Leverage Points & Opportunities**

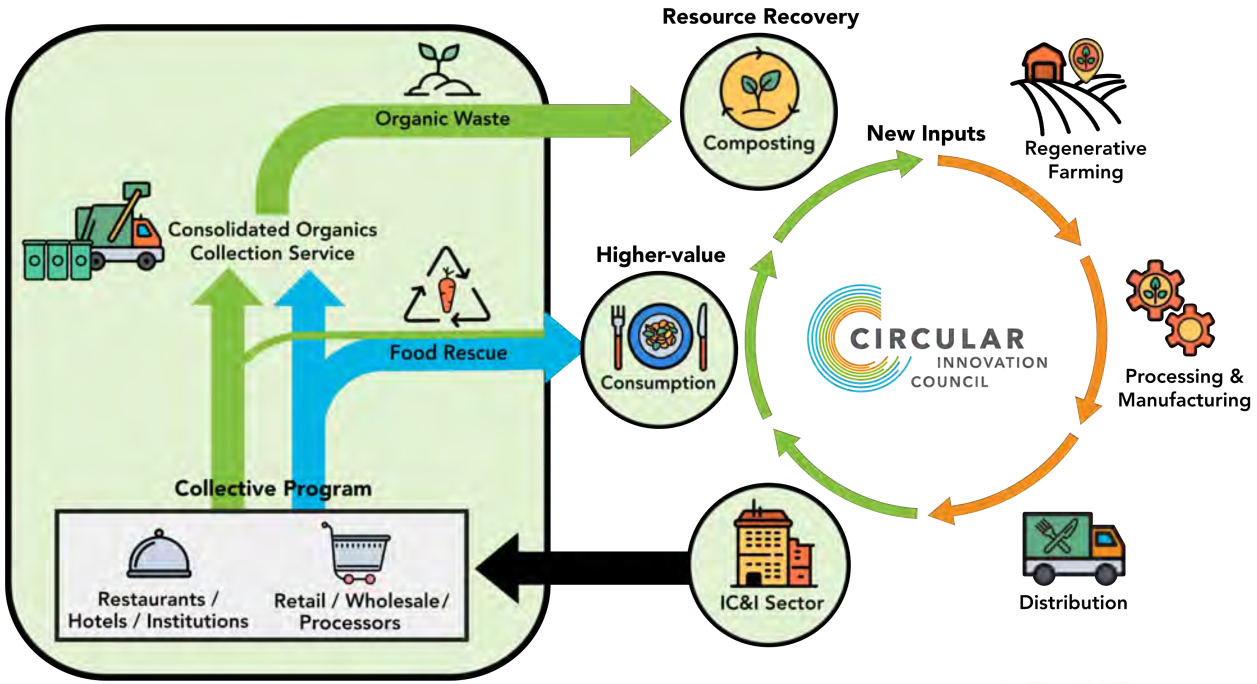
* Circular Innovation Council (2025). *Investigating Barriers, Drivers, and Opportunities that Influence Diversion of Organic Waste in Canada's IC&I Sector*. Research prepared for Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

Opportunity for Intervention

# CIC's Place-Based Pilot Models: Commercial Food Waste Diversion Program

## How Pilot Model Works

**CIC partners with municipality, hauler, organic material processors, and surplus food donation organizations** - creates strong partner network to implement regional pilot programs.



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**Improve IC&I establishments' access to food waste diversion services by leveraging regional economies of scale** - grouping businesses together on shared collection routes to improve fragmentation.

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**Improve IC&I establishments' access to food waste diversion services by leveraging regional economies of scale** - grouping businesses together on shared collection routes to improve fragmentation.

- ✓ **Reduce organics collection costs** through improved collection transportation efficiencies.
- ✓ **Support for implementing food donation and organics diversion practices** through program education, tools & advisory support on food donation and composting.
- ✓ **Increases local voluntary IC&I adoption of circular end-of-life management practices** for food donation and organic waste collection solutions for future policy and programming.

Case Study

# Pilot Program in Strathcona County and Westlock

## 6-month Pilot program (June-December 2024) in Westlock and Strathcona County, AB

### Municipal Partners

STRATHCONA COUNTY

TOWN OF Westlock

### Operational Partners and Funders

GFL
Organics Collection

AltRoot
Organics Processing

LEFTOVERS
Program Coordination & Food Rescue

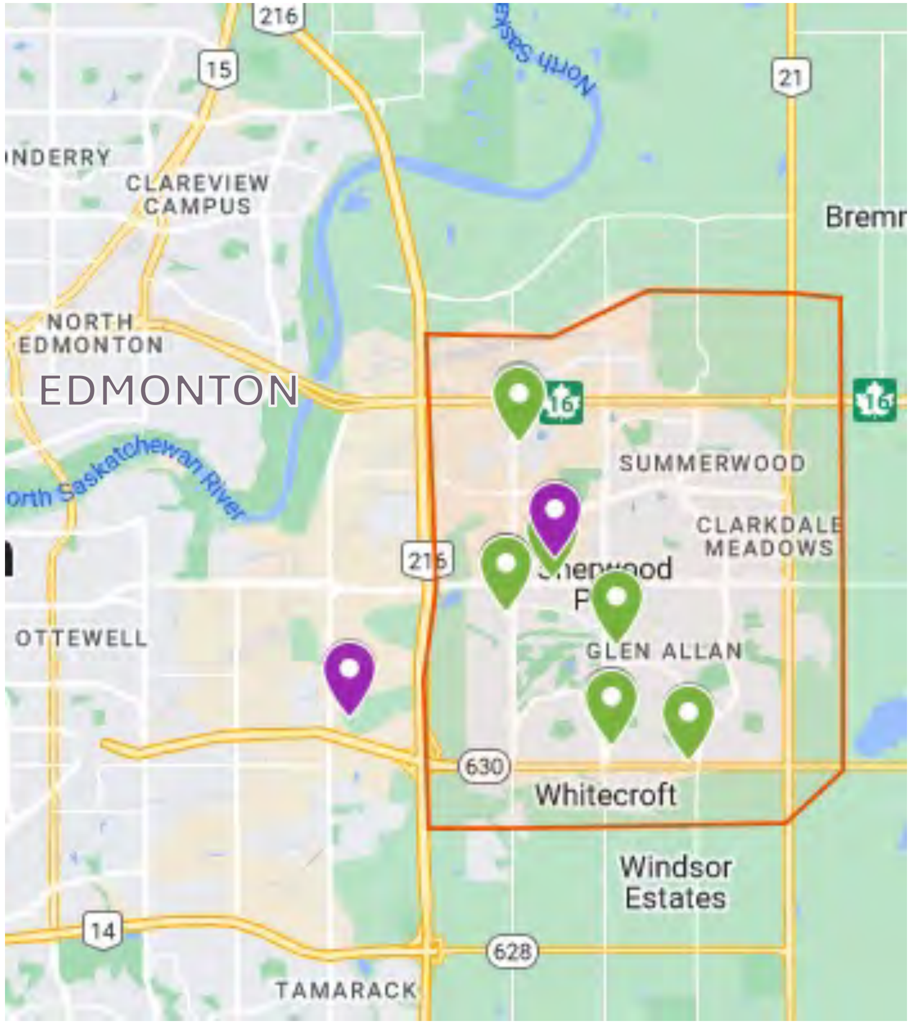
ALBERTA ecotrust

NSERC CRSNG

ECOSAFE ZERO WASTE

WAVsmart

TELUS Business



Case Study

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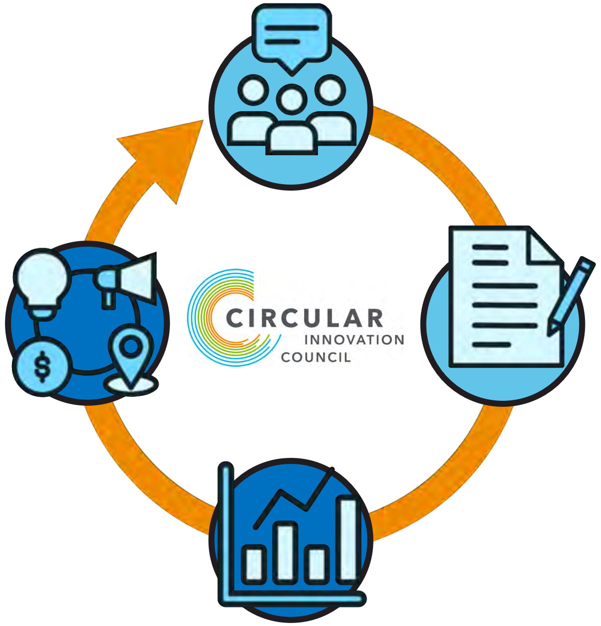



## Purpose: To build a foundation for advancing regional IC&I food waste diversion solutions in these communities

Support Strathcona County and Westlock to:

- **Test cost-effective organics diversion systems** before introducing municipal programs or mandates
- **Engage stakeholders early** (IC&I businesses, waste haulers, and processors) to build future readiness
- **Generate data** on IC&I feedstock diversion volumes, GHG emission reductions, resource recovery, and program feedback


Case Study

# Pilot Program in Strathcona County and Westlock

## Design and Partnerships:

**Collaboratively designed and implemented program** with all municipal, industry, and non-profit partners, acknowledging different roles to play:

- **CIC** provided pilot blueprints and led program management,
- **Leftovers Foundation, Strathcona County, and Westlock staff** - coordination, and municipal advisory support
- **GFL, AltRoot (in Westlock), Ecosafe, and WavSmart** - service providers, suppliers, industry advisors, and data sources
- **Decisions were made collaboratively and iteratively**: ie. Design of scale, service structure, data tracking, IC&I outreach strategies, and post-pilot plans

Case Study

# Pilot Program in Strathcona County and Westlock

## Participation and Operations:

**15 IC&I establishments** in Sherwood Park (eg. restaurants, grocery, cafes, food manufacturers); limited participation in Westlock

- **Outreach for recruitment focused on SME inclusion** as the target to benefit most from group-service pilot model
- **Partner hauler (GFL) integrated participants into existing service route** to optimize efficiency and reduce costs
- **CIC provided small subsidies** for collection costs for each participant; each participant paid ~$10 per 240L cart per collection
- **Participants received support to start diverting food waste** including starting supplies and advisory services
- **Tracked organics diversion for each participant** including tonnage diverted, GHG reductions, and resources recovered


Case Study

# Pilot Program in Strathcona County and Westlock

**34** tonnes of food waste diverted from landfill

**16** tonnes of healthy soil amendment created for regenerative agriculture

**1150** tonnes of $CO_2e$ avoided from entering atmosphere

Case Study

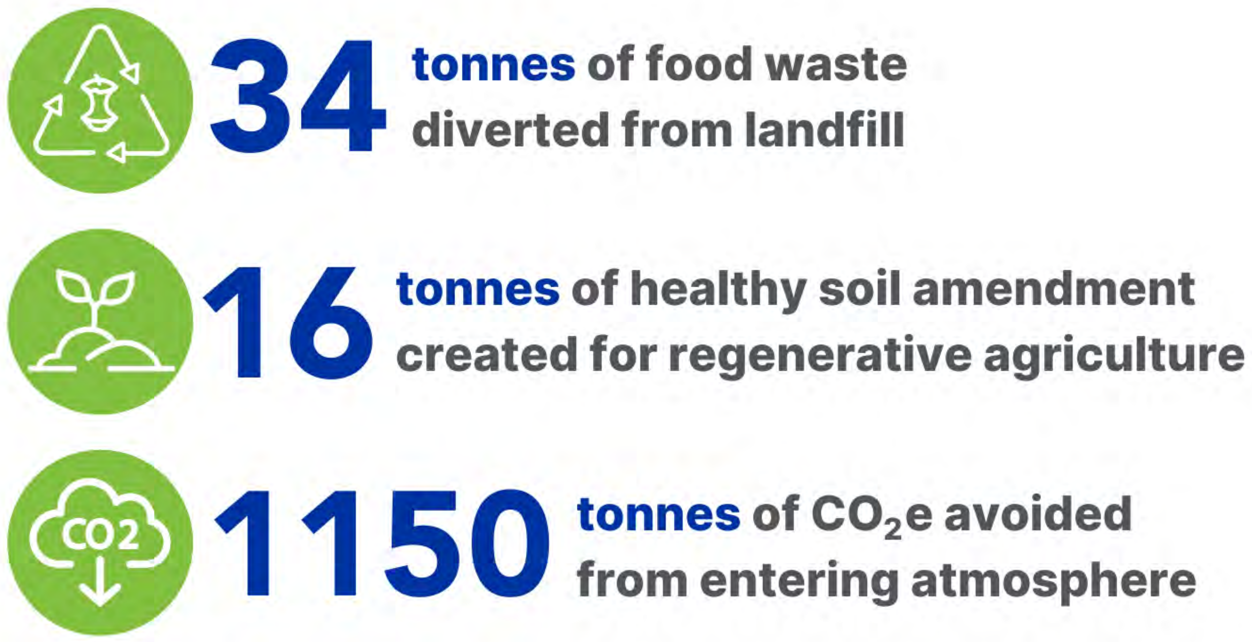
# Pilot Program in Strathcona County and Westlock

## Key Learnings:

**Success factors:** municipal leadership, stakeholder collaboration, providing IC&I participants with tools and lower cost

**KPIs and Evaluation were essential:** Weight-based data and IC&I feedback diversion and GHG reduction evidence to inform policy, investment, and programming

**Common barriers:** cost of collection, bin space, low SME voluntary participation



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## Post-Pilot Program Impacts:

- **Strathcona County** took over program management
- **Findings inform future IC&I organics by-law**s and cost-effective service models
- **Municipalities can de-risk** policy transitions through pilots
- **Replicable template** for municipalities advancing circular economy systems

# Driving Systemic Change

**The pilots are embedded within the larger regional circular food economy—**

- ✓ Downstream resource recovery through circular end-management, and
- ✓ Data-enabled decision-making by local stakeholders.

**This model shows how shared regional services, coordinated cross-sector governance, and access to reliable data can:**

- ✓ Reduce diversion barriers for ICI sector
- ✓ Inform broader waste & climate policies, regional infrastructure planning, and advancing circular markets.

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# THANK YOU

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## OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS: