



**RECYCLING & ENERGY CENTER®**  
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

## Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board: About Us

**The Board:** The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E Board) is a joint powers board created by Ramsey and Washington Counties in Minnesota, and includes nine elected county commissioners: five from Ramsey County and four from Washington County. Two ex-officio non-voting members represent the MPCA and the City of Newport.

**What We Do:** The R&E Board administers joint trash and recycling activities for the two counties, and owns and operates the Recycling & Energy Center (R&E Center), a waste processing facility located in the city of Newport. The R&E Board also plans, supports, and implement a number of trash reduction and recycling efforts, including popular programs to help local businesses reduce their operating costs through customized, on-site recycling programs ([www.BizRecycling.com](http://www.BizRecycling.com)).



**The R&E Center:** A 1,500 ton-per-day resource recovery facility that shreds and separates trash to create value-added products. Trash is tipped by haulers onto a floor the size of a football field, and is fed into two processing lines that shred and sort the trash. The Center recovers metals for recycling, and produces refuse-derived fuel (RDF), which is currently used by power plants to generate enough electricity to power 28,000 homes.

**The Mission:** After significant research, the counties made decisions about the future of trash management in the East Metro. They used five guiding principles to guide decision making. With a focus on the resource value of trash and opportunities presented by new technology, the counties’ plans include upgrading the R&E Center to recover more materials for recycling and recover energy in different ways. The vision is to get the most value out of trash from the East Metro area, while diverting as much as possible from landfills and meeting and exceeding the State’s 75% recycling goal.

### Guiding Principles the Future of Resource Management in the East Metro:

1. Plan for a 20-30 year horizon.
2. Build on the current system and allow changes in processing to emerge over time.
3. Assure flexibility.
4. Manage risks.
5. Pivot the view from “waste” to “resources” to add value to the local economy and environment.

**A Certain Supply of Waste:** Waste designation is the term used in Minnesota law that allows the counties to enact an ordinance that requires all of the trash produced in the county to be delivered to a designated waste management facility. Sometimes called “flow control,” waste designation can be put into place after a thorough planning process that is approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). After a two year process, with a lot of public engagement, Ramsey and Washington counties adopted waste designation ordinances in 2017 that went into effect on January 1 of 2018.



**Looking to the Future:** The R&E Board plans to improve and update the R&E Center to recover more recyclable materials and develop alternate markets for products produced at the R&E Center. Designs are being made to add state-of-the art technology for this purpose. These projects will require moving some current equipment, replacing other equipment, and building new space for equipment and storage. In addition, the R&E Board is working to develop alternate markets for products produced from trash. In 2018 – 19 a two phase RFP process is being used to identify vendors to provide a privately owned and operated gasification facility to produce biofuels. In later years, the R&E Board plans to develop privately owned and operated anaerobic digestion capacity.

Timeline for R&E Center Projects

Task	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Conversion of RDF to Biofuels and Biochemicals (gasification)</b>				
Procurement of private vendor	X			
<b>Pre-processing</b>				
Durable compostable bags – Partnerships, design	X			
Equipment and Technology review	X	X		
Preliminary designs and Engineering Peer Review	X	X		
Financing, Procurement		X		
Construction and acceptance			X	X
<b>End Markets for Organics: Composting, Anaerobic Digestion</b>				
Policy and partnerships	X			
Specifications, technologies		X		
Procurement			X	
<b>Existing Administration and Communications Building Modifications</b>				
Identify administrative and communications needs	X			
Design		X		
Construction, in coordination with other projects			X	