

REGIONAL WOOD REUSE HUB, CONCEPT PAPER

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JUSTICE IN THE WOOD REUSE SUPPLY CHAIN

By becoming involved in the collection, distribution and re-manufacture of wood, individuals and communities most harmed by extraction can benefit the most by reuse.

Extraction is the essence of our linear supply chain in which devastated countries and neighborhoods populated by the least empowered people are treated as source material for burgeoning development. Deforestation of the rainforest and North American woodlands is akin to demolition of the built environment. Both deforestation and demolition steal natural resources from the homelands of people of color to benefit the economically privileged.

Thousands of acres of buildings a year are wasted. Wood mistakenly qualifies as “recycled” when it is incinerated for biofuel, crushed for mulch, or mixed with glues for particle board. Most of it, however, is landfilled.

Yet, jobs proliferate where residents, entrepreneurs, makers and laborers claim their place in the reuse and preservation economy. Cities can empower human-scale economies by insisting on reuse, not extraction, of their resources. Architects and the construction industry can succeed in the new economy when a reliable flow and volume of reused wood is guaranteed. Local economies thrive when there are skilled workforce opportunities to reuse existing materials and deliver products to a growing marketplace. Only in this way, can we reduce our consumption of raw materials mined and trucked in for the development of expanding cities. Reuse of materials is a renewable source of economic power.

A **WOOD REUSE HUB** for the northeast can enable local communities to capture and store excess material for large-scale applications while returning value to the community where it originates. It can become a training center for an expanded workforce in the reuse economy. Training centers become hiring sources.

Reuse stores and neighborhoods can be brokers for sale of their wood. Wood cleaning, de-nailing and retail space will be home for entrepreneurs and workers in the creative economy.

A proposed site for the Wood Reuse Hub in Springfield, Massachusetts offers accessible freight collection and distribution by interstate highways and railroads from all 11 northeast states.

Treasure the built environment for a future of justice without waste.

