

Impacts on Municipalities and State Agencies

Municipal recycling programs are struggling. Volatile or disappearing markets for materials and rising labor costs have compromised their ability to meet their fundamental purpose: to divert usable materials from final disposal. Municipalities are adapting by removing problematic materials like glass or plastic from their collection streams, temporarily halting recycling collection, or other measures — in other words, in the interest of cost savings, these programs have had to make changes that compromise the reason they were established in the first place. Ultimately, cities need longer-term solutions.

Modernized DRSs are one of the tools that can guarantee that materials are reused — achieving the ultimate goal of city recycling programs for a significant subset of recyclable materials — and enable cities to reorient their recycling programs for long-term success. Reloop’s research has shown that, in addition to supporting city and state-level waste diversion goals, modernized DRSs will save municipalities money.

As part of the current study, Reloop conducted a state-by-state and city and town-specific full cost accounting of the impact of modernized DRS on municipalities in the Northeast and calculated cost or savings impacts in the following areas:

- Garbage collection costs

- Recycling collection costs

- Disposal fees

- MRF processing fees, with anticipated MRF revenue losses factored in

- Litter cleanup costs