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July 10, 2018

Re: Comments on Cook County Solid Waste Plan

Dear Deborah Stone and Members of the Cook County Sustainability Office,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit comments on the priorities of the Cook County Solid Waste Plan. As a nonprofit organization that diverts construction and demolition debris from north suburban Cook County, we know firsthand the benefit of having a strong waste plan and commitment to sustainable waste management. Below are our comments, which target sections of the Plan that relate to our mission.

**Improve Construction & Demolition Debris Diversion (page 63)**

8.2 Update the 2012 Cook County Demolition Debris Diversion Ordinance to align with other progressive districts noted in the document.

Specifically, consider:

- Requirements for deconstruction – require buildings of a certain age to be deconstructed and every demolition or renovation project to have a salvage period.
- Require all real estate developments that receive financial assistance, such as tax increment financing (TIF), or special zoning approvals must meet the required waste hierarchy and reuse percentage.
- Integrate waste diversion management with local economic development efforts. Recycling, reuse and deconstruction are important employment markets that also divert huge amounts of materials from landfills. Explore ways to integrate these strategies and grow employment for residents in waste diversion employers.

8.3 Public Education and Outreach Programs should also include information on deconstruction.

8.4 Include information about reuse warehouses and deconstruction as part of contractors' education.

Other ideas to strengthen results of this goal:

**Public Education and Outreach**

- Provide information about the locations of reuse centers and deconstruction companies in Cook County in the Solid Waste Plan, on the Cook County sustainability website, and on other County Solid Waste Management communications materials.
- Provide educational information on the Cook County Demolition Debris Diversion Ordinance and the financial and environmental benefits of reuse and deconstruction to all contractors; on permit applications; on real estate purchase & sale agreements; and on commercial lease agreements.
- Educate developers/architects/builders/building owners about the advantages of salvaging materials and incorporating reclaimed materials into design.
- Educate about the social, financial and environmental benefits of following the "Three Rs" waste hierarchy.



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**Ordinance Enforcement**

- Ensure that all requests for demolition, deconstruction or alterations of a structure present a waste diversion plan at the beginning and end of their projects.
- Track all waste disposal and diversion through Cook County's Green Halo system and report on progress. Require evidence of using the waste hierarchy, showing high levels of salvage, reuse, and recycling before finally using landfills.

**Incentivize C&D Diversion**

- Create incentives for projects that show plans for high levels of reuse and waste diversion (e.g. expedited permits).
- Reward renovation and new construction projects using a certain percentage of reclaimed materials over those using new materials.

We would be eager to explore ways to partner with Cook County on its sustainability efforts related to construction and demolition debris. Please get in touch if you have questions or would like additional information regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aina Gutierrez", with a stylized, flowing script.

Aina Gutierrez  
Executive Director