

CONSUMPTION AND WASTE

How to be an EcoFriendly Longhorn

According to the EPA, the United States produced 267.8 million tons of municipal solid waste in 2017 and less than half of that was composted or recycled. The production and disposal of goods are both causes of greenhouse gas emissions, as energy is used to create the products and to handle the waste. Minimizing the amount of waste that is sent with the landfill begins with minimizing the amount of waste produced in general. In addition to recycling; reducing, reusing, repurposing and refusing goods all contribute to lowering the amount of waste that is produced each year.

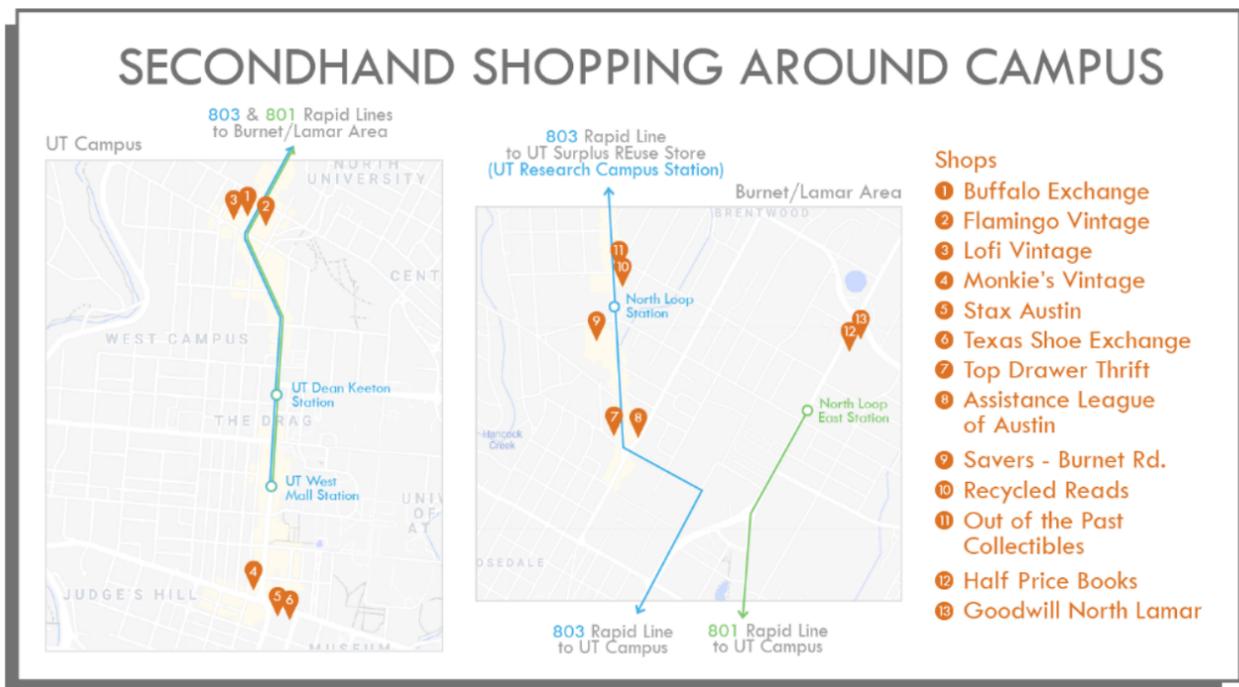


CONSUME CONSCIOUSLY

When utilizing products that have undergone energy and resource intensive processes of extraction, refinement, manufacturing and transportation, the product produces considerably more waste than just the end product. To lower the impact you make through personal consumption, opt for products that are long-lasting and ethically and sustainably produced. Utilizing tools such as [Good On You](#) and [B Corporation Certification](#) labels to identify the best products to purchase based on their environmental and social impact.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN BUYING SOMETHING

- Do I know where the materials in this product might have been sourced and whether there's a human cost involved in this product's production?
- What do I know about the company producing this product?
- Is this product something that I need and will use for a long time? Is my use of it worth the resources put into it?
- Once this produce reaches its end of use, what can I do with it? Am I able to put it to other uses or recycle it?



BUY OR DONATE SECOND HAND

Buying and donating second hand is a great way to keep materials that still have life in them out of landfills while also saving money!

- Purchase and donate used items with [Trash to Treasure](#), an on-campus sale where all items are sold for \$1, and at other local thrift stores around campus.
- Visit the [UT Surplus REuse Store](#) where used items from campus are sold at a discount
- Visit the [Austin Reuse Directory](#)
- Utilize the [UT Buy/Sell/Trade/Free Facebook page](#), Craigslist or eBay to easily shop second hand online.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT UT IS DOING TO REDUCE WASTE:

[Zero Waste Program](#)
[Sustainability Zero Waste](#)

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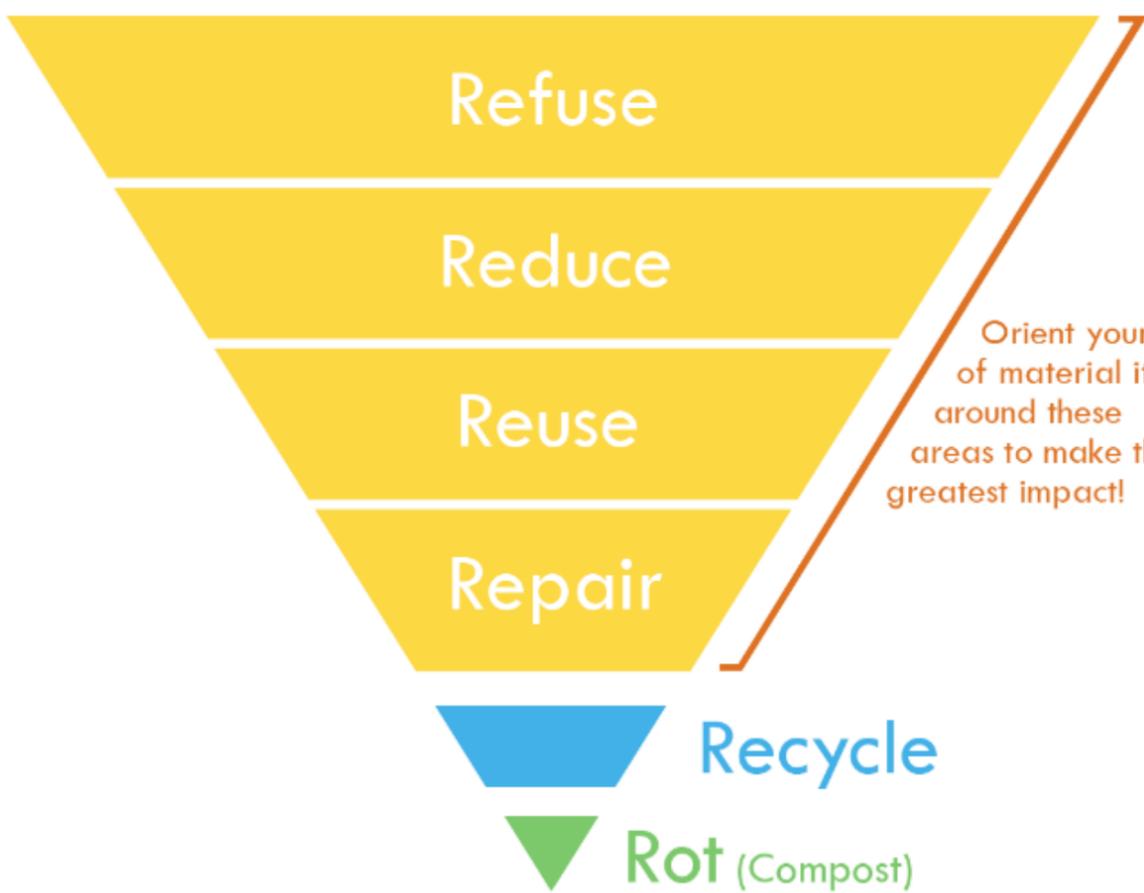
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REUSE

Instead of using single-use plastics or other single-use items, opt for reusable items that can reduce the amount of waste that you're producing. When shopping, bring reusable bags with you to the grocery store to avoid using single-use plastic bags. Utilize reusable mugs and water bottles to cut out single-use drink cups and keep a set of reusable utensils on hand to not rely on single-use plastic utensils at restaurants.



THE WASTE HIERARCHY



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PROPERLY DISPOSE OF YOUR WASTE

One of the most important parts about properly disposing of waste is avoiding contamination, or materials sorted into the wrong bin. Contamination presents challenges in the recycling/composting process and can be costly to facilities. As a general rule, if you don't know for sure what bin an item belongs in, put it in the landfill bin to avoid contamination. Compost goods like food scraps, natural fibers, and paper that is identified as compostable and recycle goods like plastics, cardboards, paper, and glass.

RECYCLING

DEFINITION: Recovering the materials from used items so that they can be remade into new products

WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED IN AUSTIN?

- Paper
- Glass
- Cardboard
- Plastic Bottles and Containers
- Metals

WHAT CANNOT BE RECYCLED IN AUSTIN?

- Wrappers and Packets
- Paper Cups and Cartons (mixed materials)
- Plastic Bags and Styrofoam
- Food
- Compostable Paper
- Compostable Plastic

COMMON CONTAMINANTS AT UT

- Paper drink cups with inner plastic coatings (mixed materials)
- Film plastics and plastic utensils/straws (get caught in machinery)
- Greasy pizza boxes (food-soiled, belong in compost!)

VS

COMPOSTING

DEFINITION: Converting organic materials (things that were recently living) into nutrient-rich compost. Compost is put back into the earth to fertilize the land and grow more food

WHAT CAN BE COMPOSTED IN AUSTIN?

- Food Scraps
- Natural Fibers (like paper towels and bamboo)
- Yard Trimmings
- Food-Soiled Paper
- Bioplastics with a BPI certification
- #7 PLA Plastic

WHAT CANNOT BE COMPOSTED IN AUSTIN?

- Items Painted or Treated with Chemicals
- Glass
- Medical Waste
- Liquids
- Metals and Plastics

COMMON CONTAMINANTS AT UT

- Non-compostable cutlery
- Food wrappers and packaging
- Paper cups not labeled compostable

For more information on what you can and cannot recycle or compost in Austin, check out Austin Resource Recovery's website at www.austinrecycles.com

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