Construction and Demolition waste impact, policy and diversion

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Introduction

Waste is one of the biggest sustainability challenge in today's world. One of the main reasons this is a bigger issue is due to the throwaway society that we have created for ourselves. The problem of waste is not just that we throw away things, by wasting the resources; but the implications varies from polluting the environment, economic inequality, social justice. With growing population and urban infrastructure, construction and demolition (C&D) waste is a branch that needs focus. The opportunities to improve C&D waste management, data collection and strategies to divert are few areas that must be addressed.

Methods and Interventions

Complexities of this sustainability challenge include several layers of organized management. The report recognized a few intervention points for better management of C&D waste. To begin with, the focus could be on primary stakeholders such as homeowners, businesses owners, government organization. Homeowners and businesses owners can intervene by changing behavior towards salvage materials. Government organizations can contribute by changing policy in the cities to bring more awareness and education among people.

- **Homeowners:** Adopting green building practices. More conscious consumerism to help appropriate diversion of deconstructed building materials if the house is being renovated or demolished.

- **Business owners:** Can bring in change by lobbying for better policies in handling C&D waste. Contractors play an important role in this intervention point as they embody the knowledge and power to dispose materials in a better way.

- **Government organizations:** Can help by recognizing the need for change for a sustainable future. The futuristic thinking helps to pay attention to the three pillars of sustainability: Social, economic, environment.
Next possible steps:

1. ADEQ has an opportunity to work on consistent and clear definition of the components of C&D waste and standardizing it within the entire state.
2. Capture specific data such as metal, furniture, kitchen deconstruction waste to quantify the amounts of waste generated.
3. Collect data for neighborhoods where construction, renovation or demolition is taking place.
4. Train contractors to handle C&D waste in specific ways.
5. Build C&D coalition within Arizona. This will help to share best practices and a community to support recycling of C&D waste.

Finally, to conclude C&D materials that are donated to the salvage stores may not be diverted from the landfill. Sometimes materials will end up in landfill due to damage during deconstruction, transportation or inventory management. Organization need to build capacity for capturing incoming and outgoing items to help identify diversion rate.