

Polypropylene Recycling

IMPACT IN PROGRESS



Facility Upgrades Near Austin, Texas Boost Polypropylene Capture

Taylor Material Recovery Facility, Texas: Case Study

Once a small, outdated materials recovery facility (MRF) in Central Texas, the Taylor, Texas site is now a key hub for recovering polypropylene (#5) and other plastics. When Circular Services, formerly Balcones, acquired Wilco Recycling in 2021, the facility lacked the infrastructure to sort polypropylene, a widely used plastic with growing end-market demand. Today, it's helping close that gap.

Early on there wasn't a good outlet to sell [polypropylene],” said Cody Lovas, the facility's general manager. “As avenues opened up to sell it, we weren't able to hand-sort enough of it.”

The facility serves Travis and Williamson counties — home to nearly 2 million people and the state capital, Austin. Manually recovering polypropylene from the waste stream is “basically impossible,” said Lovas, citing the wide range and small size of items like straws, yogurt cups, and lids.

With support from The Recycling Partnership's Polypropylene Recycling Coalition, the facility installed an optical sorter that automatically detects and captures polypropylene. The system came online in September 2024 and, by January 2025, was processing over 30 tons per month. The recovered plastic is sold to recyclers and remade into household products and durable goods.

Like many MRF upgrades, the investment in polypropylene capture delivers more than one win. It's also improving aluminum recovery from used beverage cans. “As polypropylene is sorted out, everything else down the line is easier to sort and clean,” said Lovas.

Next Step: Education

Boosting capture at the MRF starts at the curb. If residents don't know polypropylene is recyclable, it won't make it into the cart. That's why strong community education is essential — not just from the MRF to households, but also to the municipalities the facility supports.

“We are constantly using our social media to help with education,” Alexandra Gyarfas, director of marketing, said. “We also partner with municipalities directly to help with data-sharing and recommending informational campaigns.”

Once word gets out about the facility's upgraded capabilities, polypropylene capture is expected to rise. Gyarfas and Lovas see this as a clear step toward strengthening Texas's recycling system — keeping valuable plastic in circulation and out of landfills.

Turning MRF Upgrades Into Resident Action



Upgrading MRFs isn't enough if residents don't know what's now recyclable. Without clear, consistent communication, new capacity goes unused and valuable material is lost. Municipalities are the critical link that turns infrastructure into action. A layered outreach strategy using direct mail, social media, and existing communication channels ensures residents get the message and act on it. Coalition grants help close this gap by providing targeted support to community programs that are often under-resourced and overstretched. When education keeps pace with infrastructure, the whole system wins.