

# The World's First Mall for Recycled Goods

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Last week I wrote about the [Edinburgh Remakery](#), and how they are trying to foster a culture of repair. It's one of the most shared posts I've ever written, and there's clearly a real interest in this whole idea. Lots of you have been in touch to share similar projects, including this one from Sweden.

[ReTuna Återbruksgalleria](#) is a mall dedicated entirely to repaired and upcycled goods. It combines a traditional municipal recycling centre with a shopping centre, so that people can drop off goods that they no longer need, and then browse for something new – perhaps stopping off at the cafe in between. It's the first mall of its kind in Sweden, and as far as they know, the first in the world.



Staff at the recycling depot intercept and sort incoming goods as they are dropped off, putting aside those that can be repaired or refurbished. They are then passed on to workshops to be renovated and sold on in one of the 14 shops in the shopping centre. There are specialist outlets for furniture, computers and audio equipment, clothes, toys, bikes, gardening tools, and building materials. Everything for sale in these stores is secondhand.

The centre also includes a cafe/restaurant with lots of organic options, an exhibition area, conference facilities and a training college for studying recycling. And if you're wondering about the name, the 'tuna' is short for Eskilstuna, the town where you will find this intriguing place.



There are so many good things about this project. Residents can get rid of unwanted stuff, same as they would anywhere else. But rather than burdening local government with that disposal, it turns that waste into an opportunity. Goods are diverted from the waste stream and put back into circulation, saving the materials and embodied energy. 50 new jobs were created in repair and retail. The centre itself is operated by the municipality, but the shops are private businesses and social enterprises, so it creates space for start-ups and local artisans.

It's a stark contrast to my local recycling centre, which is little more than a loop of road with skips, and you drive around and drop off your stuff in the relevant dump – fridges here, rubble there, carpets over there. It is taken away and most of it is recycled eventually, but in every skip there's a huge amount of reusable material. There are mountains of appliances that could be repaired, and bikes that just need a little maintenance, but they are all treated as scrap. I've seen guitars in the scrap wood bin, destined to be plywood when all they needed was new strings and a polish. Imagine if those items were rescued and given a new life. Every town recycling centre could have a number of workshops and retail points on site, or could partner with shops nearby.

[ReTuna Återbruksgalleria](#) is a living demonstration of the circular economy, a very practical way of unlocking the value in what we throw away, and it's a project we could all learn from. Eskilstuna got there first, but perhaps one day you'll find something very similar in your own town.

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