



RiverRecycle



From River Waste to Retail Space: Riverrecycle Boards Transform Tambay Cycling Hub

The global plastic pollution crisis demands more than short-term fixes; it calls for long-term, value-driven transformation. Riverrecycle, established in Helsinki in 2019, is at the forefront of this shift, converting plastic waste from rivers into sustainable materials that support circular economies. This case study explores the collaboration between Riverrecycle and Tambay Cycling Hub, a community-centric bicycle shop in Kapitolyo, Pasig, Metro Manila.



The Client and Challenge



Tambay Cycling Hub

Tambay Cycling Hub was founded by Kevin Skinker in 2022 as a space not only for selling bikes and accessories but for nurturing Metro Manila's cycling culture. Located near the Pasig River, the shop has always embraced environmentally-conscious values. The shop's name, "Tambay," Filipino for "to hang out," and its slogan, "Tambike Tayo" (let's hang out and bike together), encapsulate its inclusive and communal philosophy.

From its grand opening to programs like the pay-what-you-can Community Parts Bin, Tambay emphasises accessibility, sustainability, and human-centred urban living. When relocating to their new retail space at 93 East Capitol St., the team saw the opportunity to reflect these values more tangibly through interior design.

The Design Challenge

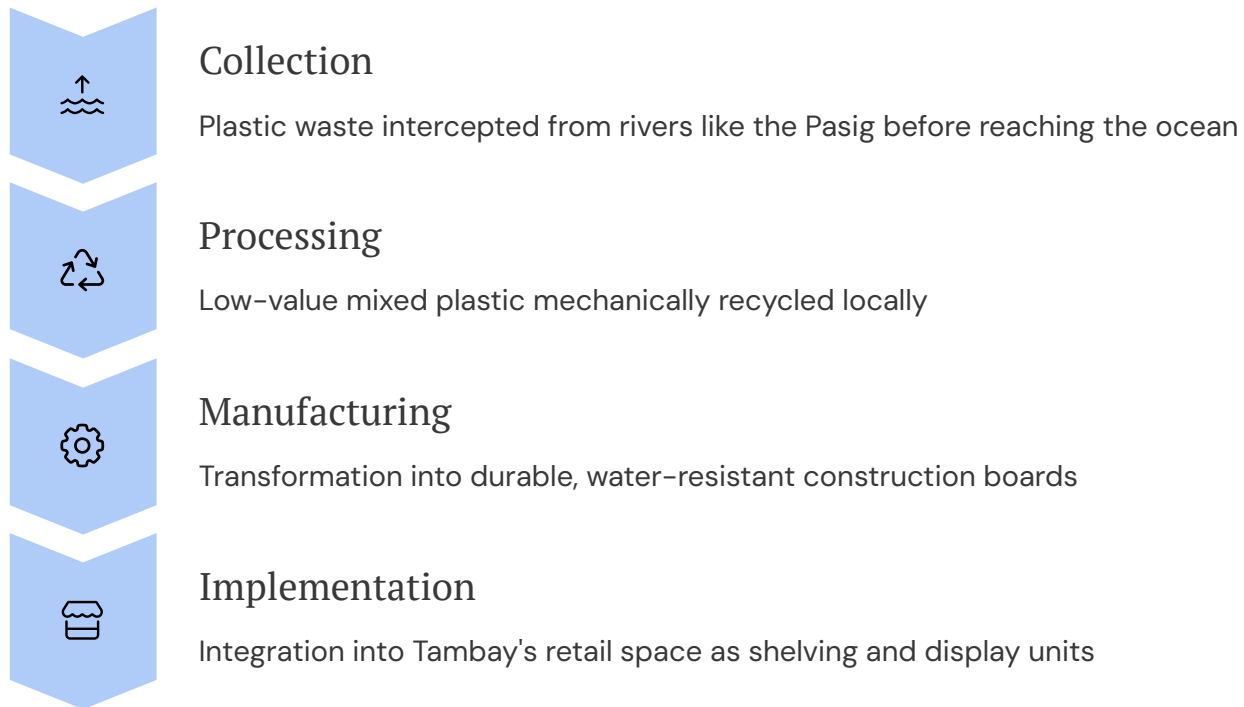
Designing for a high-traffic, tool-heavy environment like a bike shop poses unique demands. Shelving and display materials must be durable, moisture-resistant, and able to withstand wear from bike gear, tools, and customer activity. But Tambay's challenge wasn't just functional; it was philosophical. They sought interior elements that aligned with their environmental advocacy and community-first identity.

Using generic or unsustainable materials would create a dissonance between their brand and their physical space. In a context like the Philippines, where plastic pollution in rivers like the Pasig is a daily reality, the stakes for making authentic, conscious material choices are high. Truly circular solutions, particularly those rooted in local recovery and reuse, remain rare. Tambay needed a solution that could withstand the rigours of the shop while telling a powerful, place-based story.



The Solution: Riverrecycle Boards

Riverrecycle's boards offered an ideal solution. Manufactured from low-value mixed plastic waste collected directly from rivers, the boards are mechanically recycled and turned into construction-grade panels. For the Philippine context, this meant that the very materials causing environmental degradation could be transformed into the foundation of a community business.



Launched in early 2025, Riverrecycle Boards are a durable, water-resistant alternative to traditional shelving materials like wood. Available in various sizes, they're adaptable for diverse retail needs. But more than their physical properties, these boards are imbued with narrative potential. Every panel is a testament to how waste can be redefined as a resource and how community-led businesses can participate in large-scale environmental impact.

By operating collection and recycling facilities locally, including in the Philippines, the company reduces environmental impact while supporting local economies and green job creation.

Riverrecycle's full-circle approach includes river interception and land-based waste prevention, complemented by local recycling of low-value plastic, typically hard to recycle, into durable construction boards. This focused recycling strategy reduces environmental impact while supporting local economies and green job creation by transforming problematic plastic streams.

In Tambay's new location, Riverrecycle boards were used to build shelving and product display units, core elements of the store layout. Their functional role was clear: support bikes, tools, and merchandise in a bustling urban shop. But their symbolic value was equally significant. These boards, possibly made from plastic collected from the nearby Pasig River, transformed the act of "hanging out" at Tambay into a quiet but compelling environmental statement.

Impact and Replication

Tangible Impact

This collaboration had tangible outcomes on multiple levels. For Tambay Cycling Hub, it elevated the shop's brand while enhancing the customer experience. Customers are not just browsing bikes—they're interacting with a space that models what sustainability looks like in practice. The visible use of Riverrecycle boards reinforces Tambay's advocacy and builds customer trust through design integrity.

For Riverrecycle, Tambay represents a strategic demonstration project. As one of the first public-facing applications of Riverrecycle Boards in the Philippines, the shop becomes a living showroom for potential partners. It also validates the company's core hypothesis: that sustainable materials, when locally sourced and meaningfully integrated, can compete with and even outperform conventional options in some aspects.

More broadly, the project contributes to environmental education. By embedding circular materials into a familiar, accessible context, the project shifts perceptions about waste. It demonstrates that the circular economy isn't abstract, it's right here, in the shelving of your neighborhood bike shop.

Why Riverrecycle

Riverrecycle's mission is to intercept plastic waste before it reaches the ocean, where damage is more difficult to reverse. Over 80% of ocean plastic comes from rivers. The company's solution is systemic: collect, sort, and recycle plastic locally, then turn it into valuable products. This circular loop not only removes plastic from ecosystems but also injects it back into local economies.

Its river-cleaning operations in the Philippines are robust, including projects along the Pasig River in Manila and Kinalumsan River in Cebu, with the capacity to collect thousands of kilograms of waste daily. By locating recycling and board production facilities near these rivers, Riverrecycle ensures the environmental and economic value of plastic remains where the damage is done, and where recovery is needed most.

Under the leadership of founder and CEO Anssi Mikola, Riverrecycle is pioneering an economic transformation. The company's approach rests on the belief that solving environmental crises at scale requires market-driven, financially viable systems. Their partnerships with governments, NGOs, and local businesses like Tambay help embed this model across regions.



Transforming Waste Into Value

The Tambay project shows how small businesses can integrate sustainability into core operations without compromising on quality or design. It demonstrates to municipalities and developers that circular products have real-world applications. It offers a pathway for other retailers, architects, and designers to follow suit

Riverrecycle invites partners across industries to explore how recycled materials can elevate both purpose and performance. As CEO Anssi Mikola puts it: "We must put capitalism to work for a cleaner and healthier future."

This case study is not just a documentation; it's a blueprint for action. The tools for transformation exist; we just need to use them.

Let's turn river plastic into a cycle of good.



Ready to build with purpose?



RiverRecycle

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RiverRecycle boards are
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