

CIF Project #248 – Best Practices Review Part 2 (Open Space Recycling)

Project Background

This project served as a follow up study to CIF Project 202 to provide supplemental information at the request of CIF Project Committee members. The purpose was to ascertain the level of public space recycling in Canada and the level of quantitative knowledge about the performance of such programs.

Study Overview

Stantec was retained in October 2009 to assist the CIF, with identifying municipalities in Canada who are conducting, or have completed, open space recycling programs. This work expanded upon the work Stantec recently completed for WDO as documented in the report “Best Practices Review” submitted to WDO, dated October 6, 2009. This study was undertaken to confirm if: 1) there are open space recycling programs implemented in Canadian municipalities that were not identified in the previous literature search conducted in May 2009 by CDN Research Associated Inc. (CDN); and, 2) if quantitative research has been completed on the programs identified which may be used to identify or confirm best practices for open space recycling.

Methodology

A list of 20 municipalities in Canada was compiled and approved by CIF. The municipalities included those known to be “leaders in recycling” or who were recognized by organizations such as SWANA for their efforts in waste diversion. In addition to the 10 municipalities in Ontario, 10 municipalities across Canada were chosen to represent a variety of sizes, programs and geographic distribution.

Each municipality was contacted by telephone to determine if they have completed any open space recycling programs and how they measure or measured the performance of the open space program(s).

Summary of Results

In general, the municipalities contacted in Western Canada do not have open space recycling programs because of the provincial deposit/return program. There is little financial incentive

for municipalities to provide these types of programs as most material is collected by “binners” (the term used by some municipalities for homeless people). Some municipalities have modified their existing waste collection containers to provide collection points for containers but do not provide stand-alone recycling containers.

In Eastern Canada, there are a wide variety of programs due to the differences in provincial/municipal legislation and population density. These range from wet/dry systems to programs governed by provincial crown corporations.

In Ontario, open space recycling is usually the responsibility of lower-tier municipalities and programs vary from municipality to municipality. Very little has been done to measure the efficiency of open space recycling programs beyond general waste composition studies with the exception of the Region of York and the City of Toronto.