

# Final Report

CIF 558.7

## Public Space Recycling

*City of London*



*Acknowledgement:*

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# 1. Executive summary

This is the final report of project CIF 558.7 – Public Space Recycling, implemented by the City of London in 2013. The project goal was to place public space recycling bins in a Business Improvement Area (BIA) that did not previously have access to public space recycling and to partner with the BIA in the implementation of the new recycling stations. By partnering with the BIA the goal was to implement a more sustainable program as a result of the buy-in from the local businesses, and their association. Waste Diversion Ontario - Continuous Improvement Fund (WDO – CIF) provided financial and technical support for the purchase of six public space three-stream waste containers.

Public space recycling provides a platform for the municipality to showcase their larger recycling program and to be a reminder about the importance of recycling around the community and away from home. Containers were purchased from EcoMedia at a cost of \$1,450 per unit and installed in the Argyle BIA – a new area within the City to have public space recycling opportunities. The main traffic artery for the Argyle BIA is Dundas Street which provide passage for approximately 25,000 vehicles daily and a strategic location for the promotion of the Blue Box program.

This price noted included the wrapping of the containers, shipping and installation at site. The three stream containers have equal storage volumes for the collection of recyclable containers, fibres, and garbage materials. The two streams of recyclables mirror London’s curbside program, which reinforces at home recycling behaviours and allows the material to be collected on a regular residential route with no additional cost to the City. The price of the bins does not include the cost to develop, print, and install the ad panels on the container – an estimated cost of \$50 - \$70 per panel.

The implementation of public space recycling bins in the Argyle BIA has been a success. By working collaboratively with the BIA membership, buy-in to waste diversion programming has been achieved. Additionally, the bins provide an excellent opportunity for the BIA to advertise the area and for the City to promote the Blue Box program.

The cost to complete the project budget was \$8,853. The City of Cornwall was approved \$3,718 funding from the Continuous Improvement Fund.

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## 2. Introduction

The City of London currently provides Blue Box recycling to 172,000 households, including 53,500 households (31%) in multi-residential buildings (2014 WDO Datacall). Collection services are provided under a contract service with 19 trucks for curbside and two trucks for multi-residential. The City owned two-stream Regional Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) was opened in August 2011 and its operation is contracted. Increasing the capture of Blue Box recyclables is part of London's overall waste diversion strategy identified in a City Public Consultation Documents:

*Road Map 1: The Road to Increased Recovery and Zero Waste (2007)*

*Road Map 2: The Road to Increased Resource Recovery and Zero Waste (2013)*

Increasing the capture of Blue Box items is an integral component of the overall waste diversion strategies. To accomplish this, the City invests in public space recycling opportunities to improve residents' awareness of the materials that are targeted in the Blue Box program, reinforce at home recycling behaviours, and divert material from these locations.



## 3. Background:

The City of London provides public space recycling in municipal facilities including recreation and community centres, some parks, and five Business Improvement Areas (BIA), including downtown London and a new BIA location implemented under this project. Public Space recycling in City facilities generally takes place inside the facilities using various plastic or metal bins. Recycling containers in parks are metal or plastic 45 gallon drums with a hole for 'cans & bottles'. Paper recyclables are not collected in parks.

Public Space recycling in BIAs uses 'EnviroBins' which are metal outdoor-use three-stream containers. In the past the implementation of recycling in BIAs involved minimal interaction between the City and the BIA. At times this has been problematic when individual businesses do not wish to have a container placed in front of their business. Under the current project a new BIA was identified to expand public space recycling. The goal of this initiative was to work more closely with the BIA in implementing the project.

## 4. The project description

The objectives of this project was to expand the opportunities for public space recycling into an area within the city that did not previously have public space recycling. More specifically to identify and partner with a Business Improvement Area (BIA) to build their support of public space recycling and for the BIA to take ownership of the program to increase its success.

Public space recycling presents the best and worst of recycling opportunities and challenges.

**At best**, public space recycling provides a platform for the municipality to showcase their larger recycling program and to be a reminder about the importance of recycling around the community and away from home.

**At worst**, public space recycling represents high operating costs to divert small tonnes, which are generally highly contaminated. This project did not set out to reduce contamination or to increase capture, or to measure these aspects.

The project scope included three aspects:

1. Identify a Business Improvement Area (BIA) that did not have public space recycling, and partnering with the identified BIA to implement the project
2. Design of ad panels for bins
3. Placement of six new public space containers in the identified BIA

### **Identify the BIA**

The City of London partnered with Argyle BIA on this project. Argyle BIA was formed in 2011 and is located in London's east end. There are over 200 member businesses. The main street through the area, Dundas Street, has a high traffic volume of over 25,000 vehicles each day. This high volume is also due to Dundas Street's placement as a gateway to London from the many small towns outside the city. Having public space recycling in this area is strategic for the general support and promotion opportunities it provides the larger Blue Box program.

### **Design of Container Ad Panels**

The recycling bins are stainless steel units with three internal containers for two-stream recyclables and litter. These units were supplied by EcoMedia which is the supplier of these containers in many Ontario municipalities, including the other BIAs in London. Each unit has advertising space on the bin, typically on the front and back panels, and some units can also contain ad panels on the smaller side panels, and the top. The Argyle units contain ad panels front and back. Unlike most other municipalities, London does not sell this ad space to businesses. Instead we use it to promote our own programs and services. Most are reserved for waste diversion messages, however we also use the space to promote other environmental programs such as water and energy conservation. In working with Argyle BIA, London agreed to provide 50% of the ad space to the BIA to promote their association. We required that they provide their own artwork. The BIA hired a summer student to assist with this process. The ads designed by the BIA are shown on the next page.



## **Placement of Containers**

City of London staff met with BIA staff to review the project and the City's collection requirements. The BIA was responsible for selecting locations for the containers and to communicate with local business owners in this regard to ensure they were in agreement with the placement.

## 5. Project Costs

Containers were purchased from EcoMedia at a cost of \$1,450 per unit and installed in the Argyle BIA – a new area within the City to have public space recycling opportunities. This price noted included the wrapping of the containers, shipping and installation at site. The three stream containers have equal storage volumes for the collection of recyclable containers, fibres, and garbage materials. The price of the bins does not include the cost to develop, print, and install the ad panels on the container – an estimated cost of \$50 - \$70.

Table 1: Project budget

| Item                            | Cost per unit | Total   |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| EcoMedia three stream sort bins | \$1,450       | \$8,700 |
| HST @ 1.76%                     |               | \$153   |
| Total cost                      |               | \$8,853 |
| CIF Funding @ 42%               |               | \$3,718 |

## 6. Concluding comments

Within the range of recycling programs provided by municipalities, public space recycling presents the best and worst of recycling opportunities and challenges. At best, public space recycling provides a platform for the municipality to showcase their larger recycling program and to be a reminder about the importance of recycling around the community and away from home. At worst this program represents high operating costs to divert small tonnes, which are generally highly contaminated. For this reason, London’s focus for this project has been on developing the opportunities of public space recycling, by increasing the number of containers, expanding into a new area and working with a BIA to gain support within local businesses for recycling and for them to take ownership of the program. This project has successfully met these objectives.

This model of container has been used successfully by the City for nearly a decade. Staff report the durability of the container as excellent. The containers purchased through this project work were refurbished from another municipality. A testament to the quality of the materials used in producing the containers. Further, the ad panels used to promote the BIA and Blue Box programs are extremely durable in nature and show relatively no signs of weathering after months of exposure. Staff recommend the use of this type of container to other municipalities considering public space recycling opportunities.