## CIF 617.5

## Multi-residential Recycling: Implementing Best Practices City of Cornwall



Final Project Report, November 25, 2015
City of Cornwall
CIF 617.5

## Acknowledgement:

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## Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 4
2. INTRODUCTION ..... 5
3. BACKGROUND: MULTI-RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING PROGRAM OVERVIEW ..... 6
4. MULTI-RESIDENTIAL GARBAGE COLLECTION ..... 8
5. THE PROJECT SCOPE ..... 10
5.1 Phase 1: Develop and maintain a database of buildings ..... 10
5.1.1 Sources \& collection methodology ..... 10
5.1.2 Database and completeness of data ..... 11
5.1.3 Summary and recommendation: ..... 11
5.2 Phase 2: Benchmarking recycling performance ..... 11
5.2.1 Procedure for estimating recycling rates ..... 11
5.2.2 Recycling rate estimates ..... 12
5.3 Phase 3: Increase recycling container capacity ..... 12
5.3.1 Type of recycling containers ..... 12
5.3.2 How much recycling capacity is being provided? ..... 12
5.4 Phase 4: Provide promotion \& education materials ..... 13
5.4.1 Print materials ..... 13
6. PROJECT BUDGET AND SCHEDULE ..... 15
7. CONCLUDING COMMENTS ..... 16
APPENDIX A - Multi-Residential Recycling Handbook ..... 17
APPENDIX B - Building Posters and Curbside Flyer ..... 18
APPENDIX C - Cart Labels ..... 19
APPENDIX D - Media Releases ..... 20
APPENDIX E - 2012-2013 Waste \& Recycling Calendar. ..... 24
APPENDIX F - 2013-2014 Waste \& Recycling Calendar ..... 25
List of Tables
Table 1: Number of households in municipality (2012 MPAC - not including senior/LTC/retirementhomes)6
Table 2: Number of households with municipal blue box program (2013 MPAC) ..... 6
Table 3: Number of multi-residential buildings and units with municipal blue box services (February 2012- including senior/LTC)7
Table 4: Multi-residential recycling before and after project (Oct. 2015) ..... 7
Table 5: Total number of recycling containers ..... 13
Table 6: Summary of Promotion \& Education materials used ..... 14
Table 7: Project budget planned and actual ..... 15

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the final report of a project implemented by City of Cornwall in 2012. The project goal was to increase recycling rates by implementing best practices in the municipal multi-residential recycling program. Waste Diversion Ontario - Continuous Improvement Fund (WDO - CIF) provided financial and technical assistant and consulting services were provided by Integrated Environmental Waste Services (IEWS) were employed to work with the Solid Waste Division staff in completing the project.

City of Cornwall currently provides blue box recycling to 21,803 households, including 4,274 households in multi-residential buildings (not including senior/long term care residences) (MPAC 2014). The number of multi-residential buildings provided with municipal recycling service increased from 107 to 189 during this project. This represents a corresponding increase in terms of residential units from 3,205 to 5,529 as of October 2015 (including senior/long term care residences).

The best practices that were implemented during this project included:

- creating a database of multi-residential properties
- evaluating the recycling performance of individual buildings and estimating the overall program recycling rate
- increasing the number of recycling containers at buildings (recycling capacity), and
- distributing new promotion and education materials to residential and building staff.

Additional work included in this project was:

- Increasing the frequency of collection to weekly and changing sorting to single stream;
- Increasing the list of acceptable materials by including polycoat products (milk and juice carts, tetra packs, gable top, frozen juice containers);
- Increasing the capture rate of plastic packaging by an enhanced promotion and education campaign.

The City of Cornwall purchased 356-95 gal rolling carts recycling containers that were added to the program, increasing the recycling capacity from 37 litres per unit to 50 litres per unit. It is estimated that implementing best practices had the effect of increasing recycling capacity by 32 per cent.

The cost to complete the project budget was $\$ 42,740$. The City of Cornwall was approved $\$ 20,395$ funding from the Continuous Improvement Fund.

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## 2. INTRODUCTION

Cornwall is one of Canada's oldest settlements, having been established in 1784 by United Empire Loyalists.

The City of Cornwall is a single-tier municipality located along the St. Lawrence River in eastern Ontario with a population of 46,340 ( 2011 Census). It is the focal point of a larger region, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Together, the City and Counties have a population of 111,164 . The First Nations community of Akwesasne is located immediately south of Cornwall and plays an integral part in Cornwall's culture, community and economy.

Cornwall's diversity is further enhanced by the presence of a large francophone population. In the 2011 Census, nearly $23 \%$ of the population identified French as their mother tongue. This fact contributes to Cornwall's standing as a proud bilingual city.

The City currently has a contract with HGC Management Inc. for the collection and processing of recyclable materials, solid waste collection, operation of the Municipal Hazardous Waste Depot as well as leaf and yard waste collection. Blue box materials collected at the curb are taken to the City's Material Recycling Facility. The material is manually sorted into different marketable categories, baled and sold. The City pays for collection and processing by the tonnage and receives $100 \%$ of the revenue of marketed materials. In 2011, the City marketed a total of 2,710 tonnes at a net cost of $\$ 481,326$. This resulted in a cost of $\$ 178$ per marketed tonne. The City's blue box diversion rate was $26.00 \%$ in 2011 (WDO Datacall).

The City began a review of its current waste management strategies and programs in 2009 and released a Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWMMP) in 2011. The SWMMP was developed to assist and guide the City's waste management programs for the next 20 years. One of its many recommendations was to increase curbside collection capacity by either providing larger blue boxes to residents, implement an automated cart system or promote the use of clear blue bags.

From 2005 to 2012, The City's recycling collection program was a bi-weekly two-stream process in which residents were required to sort their containers from the paper products. Containers (glass, plastics and metals) were placed in a blue box while paper products (newspaper, fine paper, boxboard, magazines etc.) were placed in a black box.

On April 1, 2012, the City of Cornwall switched from a bi-weekly recycling collection schedule to a weekly, single-stream blue box collection program for all households in the municipality.

## 3. BACKGROUND: MULTI-RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

City Council at the April 12, 2011 Meeting endorsed the Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWMMP) in which the implementation of a Multi-Residential Recycling Program was recommended.

In 2015, the City has 189 Multi-Residential households of over 6 units totalling to approx. 5529 units.
The City's recycling program details:

- Weekly Single stream collection began April $1^{\text {st }}, 2012$. Prior, it was a two-stream bi-weekly collection program.
- The city provides both curbside collection and onsite collection for the rolling carts and blue boxes. Since the processing is single stream the only sorting requirement is to separate old corrugated cardboard.
- 95 Gal rolling carts are provided at no cost to Multi-Residential up to 1 cart/7 unit additional carts are available by purchase. Carts provided at no cost remain property of the City.
- HGC Management is the current contract for the recycling collection in the City of Cornwall. They are using four trucks and multi-residential buildings are collected along the regular route with residential and participating IC\&I.

Table 1: Number of households in municipality (2012 MPAC - not including senior/LTC/retirement homes)

|  | Households | Percent |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Curbside | 17,361 | $80 \%$ |
| Multi-res | 4,268 | $20 \%$ |
| Total | 21,416 | $100 \%$ |

Table 2: Number of households with municipal blue box program (2013 MPAC)

|  | Curbside | Multi-res | Total |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| All households | 17,369 | 4260 | 21,416 |
| Households with municipal blue <br> box program | 17,369 | 3844 | 21,408 |
| $\%$ with blue box program | $100 \%$ | $95 \%$ | $99 \%$ |

Table 3: Number of multi-residential buildings and units with municipal blue box services (February 2012 - including senior/LTC)

|  | Buildings | Units | Average \# of <br> units per <br> building |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Total | 189 | 5529 | 30 |
| With recycling | 107 | 3205 | 30 |
| Without recycling | 82 | 2324 | 28 |
| \% recycling | $57 \%$ | $58 \%$ |  |

Table 4: Multi-residential recycling before and after project (Oct. 2015)

|  | Before <br> project | After project | \% change |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Buildings with recycling | 107 | 189 | $76.6 \%$ |
| Units with recycling | 3205 | 5529 | $33 \%$ |
| Avg. Units/building | 30 | 30 |  |

## 4. MULTI-RESIDENTIAL GARBAGE COLLECTION

Multi-Residential buildings who pay for the private collection of waste that is residentially generated can receive a waste credit from the City of Cornwall. Since buildings serviced by private contractors do not receive City curbside collection, the intention of the credit is to compensate the building owners for a service that is provided to other residential dwellings at no cost.

This credit is to subsidize the cost of private collection and the credit system was instituted following the implementation of tipping fees in 1988. Initially the credit was applied directly on the private haulers account, but that has since changed to an application system in 2014.

Prior to 2014, the credit was calculated based on a formula that used waste generation and occupancy statistics from the Census.

## Example: $\quad \mathbf{A}=[(\mathbf{B} \mathbf{X C X} \mathbf{X}) \div \mathrm{E}] \mathbf{X} \mathbf{F}$

WHERE A = \$ waste credit per collection

$$
\begin{aligned}
B= & \text { Average waste generation tonnes per person } \\
& \text { per year ( } 0.250 \text { tonnes }- \text { Statistics Canada) }
\end{aligned}
$$

$\mathrm{C}=$ \# of persons per average dwelling unit within an Apartment building (1.9 - Statistics Canada)

$$
\begin{aligned}
& D=\# \text { of dwelling units per location } \\
& E=\# \text { of collections per year } \\
& F=\text { Tipping fee (\$ per tonne) }
\end{aligned}
$$

Calculation of the residential waste credit for a 20 dwelling unit apartment building where waste is collected by a private hauler twice per week (or 104 occasions per year) and current tipping fee is $\$ 64.00$ per metric tonne:

## $A=[(B X C X) \div E] \times F$

$$
\text { Waste Credit per collection } \quad \begin{aligned}
& =[(0.250 \mathrm{mt} / \text { per/yr. X } 1.9 \mathrm{per} / \mathrm{unit} \times 20 \text { units })] \\
& \div 104 \text { collections } / \mathrm{yr} . \mathrm{X} \$ 64 / \mathrm{MT} \\
& =\$ 5.85
\end{aligned}
$$

Therefore, the waste credit per collection for the 20 unit apartment building where waste is collected at 104 times per year is $\$ 5.85$.

The total annual credit would be $\$ 608.40$
In 2010, the Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWMMP) was implemented by the City of Cornwall. The SWMMP recommended eliminating the credit system as it is a disincentive to divert waste from the landfill because it reduces the cost for disposal offering no incentive to sort and separate recyclable materials.

In 2014, the credit system was changed to a rebate program in which building owners needed to submit an application and provide actual tonnage quantities. The rebate would the total tipping fee costs for the actual tonnages collected and paid directly to building owner. To qualify for the credit, the multiresidential building must have participated in the City's blue box/cart program, and not use curbside garbage collection.

## 5. THE PROJECT SCOPE

The project scope included four main phases:

- Develop Database of multi-residential properties (CIF's Microsoft Access database template available). Property list will be provided to the successful proponent.
- Perform site visits and performance evaluations. Develop benchmark performance and identify building requirements (\# carts).
- Develop with Corporation staff and CIF material promotional \& educational material including customised Superintendent Handbook.
- Distribute carts and promotional \& educational material. Carts will be purchased by the Corporation through CIF co-operative cart purchase agreement.

Once the phases were complete, staff were tasked with preparing a Final Report to share out the successes and learnings from this project work with the greater Blue Box community.

### 5.1 Phase 1: Develop and maintain a database of buildings

Creating and maintaining a database of all multi-residential properties is an important step towards implementing best practices. To obtain the list of multi-residential properties, there are a number of potential sources of data, including:

- Municipal departments such as planning, taxation, or technology services may be able to identifying properties and provide basic information (addresses, owners, and number of units, etc.)
- Property management or rental associations may have listings of their members' buildings and contact information for owners and property managers.


### 5.1.1 Sources \& collection methodology

The first source of the data was from the water meter program. In the City every multi-residential building over 6 units must have a water meter installed.

While some preliminary data can be collected by the methods discussed above, in-person site visits to each building were completed to collect detailed information such as how well the recycling program is currently working, building characteristics that may create recycling challenges or opportunities (e.g., room for recycling bins), contact information for the on-site representative (e.g. superintendent) and the role that the on-site staff play in managing the building's recycling program.

IEWS conducted in-person visits and telephone calls to collect the data for the program. The data included current recycling container types and quantity, storage of containers and garbage disposal method (curbside or private).

There were several challenges in conducting site visits. On challenge was dealing with out-of-town property owners. Some had a site superintendent or hired property management company, but it was very common with smaller buildings (6 units) to have no one on site for maintenance and tenants were responsible for their owner garbage and recycling. The information as to the site superintendent or
property management company may not have been known at the time of calls or visits. This required significant time to complete follow up calls.

### 5.1.2 Database and completeness of data

The program consultant customized the CIF Access database program for the City. Data collected in the access program included:

- Owner and superintendent contact information;
- Building type, number of units;
- Recycling program details - number of carts, collection day, special cardboard collection, cart set out location;
- Garbage collection details - collection day, curbside vs private contractor;
- Communication and image sections.

The challenge with the database is keeping up with maintenance and adding new information as received or communication details. Another challenge with using access for database is the complexity of creating reports and queries. For staff who do not regularly use the program, it can be difficult and time consuming to produce reports or add new information.

### 5.1.3 Summary and recommendation:

Annual site visits should be completed to keep information up to date. This can be done by using a summer student or by dividing up the number of building and do a few per month.

### 5.2 Phase 2: Benchmarking recycling performance

A key step in implementing program improvements is to benchmark current performance so that future recycling targets can be established and program improvements can be tangibly measured as you move towards meeting these desired targets.

Evaluating performance is a quantitative assessment that measures the following:

1) How much each building is recycling (kg/unit), and
2) How much is being recycled by all the buildings collectively.

Performance indicators such as container fullness and contamination were monitored during site visits. Performance data completed during site visits is an estimate only as it is not based on precise weights. However if done consistently research suggests that performance data has been found to be within 10$15 \%$ accuracy of actual weights. Obtaining this information from each building was instructive both for flagging low performing buildings and for highlighting top performers. Low performers were flagged for follow-up strategies and top performers provided useful model buildings.

### 5.2.1 Procedure for estimating recycling rates

The recycling rate is estimated by the number of carts/unit the building had prior to the implementation of the program.

### 5.2.2 Recycling rate estimates

The recycling rate is estimated by calculating the number of carts per units that was in services prior to the implementation of the multi-residential recycling program. With the distribution of the carts and blue boxes and increasing the number of participating buildings, we were able to increase recycling capacity (l/unit) by $32 \%$ from $37 \mathrm{~L} /$ unit to $49 \mathrm{~L} / \mathrm{unit}$. As well as increasing unit participation by $72.5 \%$ from 3,205 units to 5,529 units (including senior/long term care facilities).

### 5.3 Phase 3: Increase recycling container capacity

Having enough storage space for recyclables is one of the most critical factors in a successful recycling program and it is important to address this first before other program improvements are put in place. During Phase 2 site visits the baseline container quantities were recorded and information was collected about where containers could be relocated within the building to provide more convenience to residents. Site visits also provided the opportunity to determine if additional containers are required and where additional containers would be stored and ultimately used.

### 5.3.1 Type of recycling containers

Recycling storage space is referred to as 'capacity' and is the shared recycling containers used by building residents to deposit their recyclables. The program distributed 95 gal rolling carts to building to increase their capacity to the standard of 1 cart per 7 units. The several smaller buildings of $6-8$ units were provided with a blue box ( 22 gal ) for each unit. In addition some townhouse complexes were also provided with blue boxes as each unit received curbside garbage collection, it was determined that it would be best to continue curbside blue box collection.

### 5.3.2 How much recycling capacity is being provided?

Based on the provincial target of recycling $70 \%$ of all recyclables it is recommended that each residential unit be provided with a minimum of 50 litres of storage capacity. This is equivalent in size to a standard 14 gallon blue box. In terms of multi-residential containers, the following guidelines are recommended by CIF and are considered best practices:

- 360 litre carts - one cart for every 7 residential units
- Bulk bins - one cubic meter for every 15 residential units (eg, a 4 -yard bin for 60 units)

Continuous Improvement Funding is provided on the basis that municipalities implement these best practice ratios. The guidelines represent average requirements and it is assumed that at the building level there will be ranges depending on the demographics.

Bulk bins are not provided by the City as the current contract for collection of recycling does not include front loading vehicles.

Table 5: Total number of recycling containers

|  | Baseline <br> February 2012 | Post implementation <br> October 2015 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Units with recycling service | 3,205 | 5,529 |
| 95 gallon carts | 275 | 631 |
| 65 gallon carts | 32 | 15 |
| Blue Boxes - 22 gallon | 154 | 472 |
| Total program capacity in litres | 119,593 | 269,915 |
| Capacity per unit (I/unit) | 37 | 49 |

### 5.4 Phase 4: Provide promotion \& education materials

### 5.4.1 Print materials

A project goal was to distribute new print materials to promote recycling and educate building residents and staff about what can and cannot be recycled. With access to print templates (resident flyers, posters and container labels and a guidebook for superintendents, property managers and building owners) through the CIF website, the City produced a Superintendent Handbook that was customised to our recycling program. The City produces bilingual communication documents and the Superintendent handbook was designed to include the information in French.

- Distributing handbooks and displaying posters at multi-residential properties:

The handbook and building posters were distributed to property owners or superintendent at time of site visit or by mail.

- Distributing print materials directly to residents:

The City produces an annual Waste and Recycling Calendar which is mailed directly to each residential households and multi-residential units. Additional copies were provide to owners upon request.

- Applying labels to recycling containers:

Each cart was affixed with two labels prior to delivery to the buildings. One label was the City's 1 Green Cornwall logo on the front of the container and the second label was affixed to the lid that pictured the list of acceptable materials.

Table 6: Summary of Promotion \& Education materials used

| P\&E Component | Number distributed | Method of distribution |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Resident flyers | 100 <br> 1 per residential unit | By mail or provided during site <br> visits with owner. |
| Resident guide / calendar | 4,274 <br> 1 per residential unit | Canada Post |
| Posters | 400 <br> $1-2$ per building, depending on bldg size | By mail or provided during site <br> visits |
| Containers labels | $712-2$ per cart (top and front) | By consulting staff |
| Recycling guidebook | 200 <br> For each superintendent, property <br> manager and property owners | By mail or provided during site <br> visits |



## 6. PROJECT BUDGET AND SCHEDULE

Table 7: Project budget planned and actual

| Description | Unit | Quantity (est.) | Unit Cost (est.) | CIF Approved (upset limit) | Quantity (actual) | Unit Cost | Actual Cost |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Program support | Building | 200 | \$35 | \$7,000 | 205 | \$70 | \$7,000 |
| Increase capacity | 96 Gallon Carts | 383 | \$60 | \$11,500 | 356 | \$54.78 | \$9,751 |
| Final report | Report | 1 | \$4,000 | \$2,000 | 1 | \$2,000 | \$2,000 |
| Print costs | Handbook | 1 | \$800 | \$400 | 300 | \$3.98 | \$598 |
| Other P\&E materials | Container Labels | 1 |  |  | 1000 | \$0.59 | \$850 |
| HST @ 176\% |  |  |  |  |  |  | \$197 |
| Total |  |  |  | \$21,370 |  |  | \$20,395 |

## 7. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The overall goal of this project was to improve the recycling participation rate of multi-residential properties within the City of Cornwall and build a database of all the buildings. The project provided an opportunity for the City of Cornwall to launch a multi-residential recycling program in the City. With CIF project funding, we were able to provide additional resources to reach the best practices ratio of carts and create customized promotion and education materials for multi-residential recycling.

The site visits provided valuable detailed information on the individual buildings and provided an opportunity to identify the challenges of recycling in multi-residential buildings. The next steps for the city will be to continue to monitor and support the participating buildings with their waste diversion efforts.

The work completed under this project provided an excellent foundation for exploring further multiresidential waste diversion opportunities aligning with the City's "Solid Waste Management Master Plan".

APPENDIX A - Multi-Residential Recycling Handbook


APPENDIX B - Building Posters and Curbside Flyer


## APPENDIX C - Cart Labels



A city with a world of possibilities

## MEDIA RELEASE

## City Looks To Improve Recycling In Multi-Residential Buildings

The City of Cornwall has secured funding of up to $\$ 21,370$ from Waste Diversion Ontario to improve recycling in multi-residential buildings throughout the community.

The funding will be used to investigate and implement a number of recycling "best practices" by engaging building owners, superintendents and residents of multi-residential buildings.
"The goal of this project is to make it easier for residents and building owners to recycle," said Nicole Robertson, Solid Waste Supervisor with the City of Cornwall. "This is in line with the City's overall goal of increasing Cornwall's diversion rate and extending the life expectancy of the City landfill."

A key aspect of the project will be to evaluate the effectiveness of recycling practices currently in place in local multi-residential buildings. The City has retained the firm of Integrated Environmental Waste Services to assist with carrying out the project, and staff from the company will be conducting site visits at each of the multi-residential buildings in the City in the coming weeks. They will also be meeting with owners and/or superintendents of multi-residential properties to discuss recycling activities, and the City is encouraging all owners to participate.
"The participation of multi-residential building owners is key to the success of this project," said Mrs. Robertson. "We hope they will make themselves available to provide input and be a part of this important initiative."

Some of the other initiatives of the project include:

- Providing free recycling carts (if necessary) to building owners and/or superintendents.
- Developing and distributing a Superintendent Recycling Handbook that will provide information on how to set up and maintain a successful recycling program.

It's expected that the recycling carts and education materials will be available for delivery by the end of March.

Multi-residential properties are buildings with six or more residential units, such as apartments and condominiums.

The multi-residential recycling project is one of the many recommendations contained in the City of Cornwall's new Solid Waste Management Master Plan. The Master Plan includes a series of recommendations aimed at increasing diversion rates and extending the life of the City Landfill over the next several years. The document can be found in its entirety on the Environment section of the City website (www.Cornwall.ca).

Building on the completion of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan, the City of Cornwall is introducing a series of changes to the garbage and recycling program in April 2012, including the implementation of a weekly, single-stream recycling collection process and extension of the Leaf and Yard Waste Collection Program to 16 weeks per year. Further details will be released in the coming weeks.

The funding from Waste Diversion Ontario is being made available through the Continuous Improvement Fund, and it will cover up to 50 per cent of the total project cost (with the remaining amount being covered by the City). The Continuous Improvement Fund provides grants and loans to Ontario municipalities to execute projects that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of municipal blue box recycling.

## - 30 -

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## www.Cornwall.ca

## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release, September $28^{\text {th }}, 2012$

## City enhances recycling program in multi-residential buildings

The City of Cornwall has taken steps to improve recycling in apartments and condominiums throughout the community.

A new multi-residential recycling program has been established with the assistance of a $\$ 21,000$ grant through Waste Diversion Ontario's Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF).

The City retained the firm of Integrated Environmental Waste Services to assist with carrying out the project, which involved meeting with the various property owners and superintendents of multi-residential properties and distributing new recycling carts and boxes where needed.


Pictured fram left are Ean and Stacey Chisholm, Resident Managers with Skywine Management Inc. at the Lafiin Apartments, Nina Digioacchino of Integrated Environmental Waste Services and Nicale Robertson, Solid Waste Supervisor.
"This program will give more residents a chance to participate in our recycling program," said Mayor Bob Kilger. "We're engaging a new sector of our community to help us build a greener Cornwall, and the entire community benefits because it helps to extend the life of the City landfill."

Over 350 recycling carts have been distributed to multi-residential properties to be used in common garbage disposal areas. In addition to that, over 450 recycling boxes were delivered to townhouse complexes and smaller multi-residential buildings where common garbage disposal areas were not practical or available.

As part of the project, a Superintendent Recycling Handbook was created and distributed to give property officials the necessary information on how to set up and maintain a successful recycling program
"The goal of this project is to make it easier for residents and building owners to recycle by equipping them with the necessary tools and information," said Nicole Robertson, Solid Waste Supervisor. "This represents a major step in our overall goal of diverting more waste from the City Landfill."

The recyclables from multi-residential buildings will be picked up weekly as part of the City's regular collection schedule.

As of April, the City is now collecting recyclables on a weekly basis, in a single container. New blue boxes were issued to all households to assist with the transition to weekly collection. A number of new items are now being accepted for recycling, including polycoat containers, milk and juice cartons, gable top, Tetra Pak and frozen juice containers.

The enhancements to the recycling program are part of the 1 Green Cornwall initiative to highlight the City of Cornwall's environmental programs and encourage civic participation in the $3 \mathrm{Rs}-$ Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

A program of Waste Diversion Ontario, the Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF) provides grants and loans to Ontario municipalities to execute projects that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of municipal blue box recycling.

For additional information on recycling, please visit the Environment section of the City of Cornwall website, www.Cornwall.ca.
-30 -

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1 Green Cornwall
It all starts with 1 ... You!



