



Final Report – Continuous Improvement Fund – Project #667.13

Public Space – Downtown Depot Signage

Program Name: City of Stratford

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Date: August 5, 2014

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1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Municipal Information

Population	32,000
Households (single family)	10,265
Blue Box Tonnage (2011 Datacall)	2519
Municipal Grouping	Small Urban
Blue Box Program net cost (2011 Datacall)	\$637,746.67
Cost/tonne (2011)	\$253.14
Annual P&E Budget	\$5,900.00

1.2 Program Description

The City of Stratford collects blue box materials from both the curbside and depot. In the spring of 2012, the City of Stratford moved from a multi-stream collection (5) streams to a single stream collection program. The City of Stratford targets: Paper, glass, metals, plastics 1-7, aseptic and gable tops, cardboard and boxboard materials for the bluebox program. Since 2012, Bluewater Recycling Association processes all of the City of Stratford's recyclable materials that are collected curbside and at our depot located at the City of Stratford Landfill Site. With the exception of bulk cardboard generated from the landfill, which is stored, shipped and recycled separately. The City of Stratford receives revenue from Bluewater Recycling once the processing, residual and moisture fees are deducted.

Currently the City's Downtown recycling depots come in 2 different colours, Blue and Grey. The blue Depots have the added benefit of being the standard recycling colour. When purchased grey was used to blend better with the downtown aesthetic, this unfortunately leaves the containers less visible on the street scape and may cause them to be mistaken for garbage receptacles.



As shown above, the containers have etched polymer boards used to indicate which materials are accepted in each slot of the depot based on the old 5 stream recycling method. With the change to a single stream system these separated accepted materials are now out of date (ex. Clear and coloured glass no longer need to be separated).

2 IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Goals and Objectives

The first goal of new P&E for the depot was to display all materials that can now be effectively collected at the curbside depots. Though a number of the most common materials generated in the public were already being collected, the addition of more materials will help divert more wastes from landfill.

The second goal was to make the depots more easily recognizable as recycling depots.

The third goal of the new P&E depot program was to reduce contamination. By making special note of problem items that are found during auditing, it may be possible to reduce the contamination related to these items. This is important due to the number of seasonal visitors Stratford receives. They may be aware of the program present in their own municipality but will likely be unaware of Stratford’s program.



2.2 Messaging

The City is committed to maintaining consistent messaging throughout its Blue Box programming. Thus, the P&E materials and messaging developed for the downtown depots is consistent with the residential curbside and multi-residential recycling programs. This consistency is essential to not only prevent confusion, but to promote a unified program to all Stratford residents. Similarly, our P&E has a heavy focus on clear graphics for acceptable and not acceptable items, which is used for promoting our program to out of town visitors.

2.3 Resource allocation

Table 1: P&E Tasks, descriptions of each task, responsibilities, and date of implementation

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Timeline
Development of new signage	Develop new signage promoting all materials divertible and increase visibility in the community	Waste Reduction Coordinator	Completion- Summer 2013

Visual Audits	Visual audits for contamination and service adequacy	Waste Reduction Coordinator	Summer, fall 2013 and spring, summer 2014
Application of New Signage to Depots	Apply new signage to depots simultaneously to prevent confusion across the city	Public works personnel	Fall 2013-Winter 2014
Re-launch depots with new signage	Return recycling depots to City streets after winter season using new signage.	Public Works personnel	Spring 2014

3 MEASURING AND MONITORING

Visual audits were completed to identify contamination in the public space recycling stream and to evaluate the adequacy of service to the public space recycling program. Included in the visual audit, pictures were taken of each of the bins to record fullness and materials classified as contamination. The audits were completed throughout the month of July 2012 & 2013, on the day before collection to ensure a full week worth of materials would be represented. Below is a sample of the audit breakdown.

CIF project 667.13 Public Space Recycling Signage Initial Audit							09-Jul-13
Bin Location	Colour	Liner % Full				Contamination Issues	
		1	2	3	4		
City Hall	Grey	0	50	10	10	Take out paper and cups, clothing, paper napkins (not twinned)	
Pizza Pizza	Grey	25	75	25	25	Take out paper cartons, food wastes, cardboard (not twinned)	
York Street	Blue	50	10	25	10	PAPER CUPS IN ALL BUT ALUMINUM, PLASTIC BOTTLE WAS HEAVILY CONTAMINATED (MNOT TWINNED)	
Ontario Street	GREY	25	50	25	10	PAPER CUPS IN A NUMBER OF BINS	
Erie	BLUE	10	10	10	10	NO CONTAMINATION, SURPRISINGLY LITTLE	
T. Patterson	BLUE	75	50	15	10	PAPER CUP AND CARDBOARD CONTAMINATION	
Soccer Fields	BLUE	75	75	75	20	PAPER AND CARDBOARD, PLASTIC BAGS SOME STYROFOAM PACKAGING AS WELL	
Library	BLUE	10	10	5	0	PAPER CUPS PLACED WITH PLASTICS.	

4 RESULTS

Two sets of visual audits were conducted over a 4 week period pre-implementation and post signage implementation. The audits were conducted to assess the service level of each bin and to identify major contaminants in the recycling program.

The depots are collected weekly as part of the down town core recycling collection. It was found that during the pre and post implementation, one depot located at the library saw very little use. Less than 10 percent of the bins were filled during each collection period. This will be an area we will look at relocating next year, in order to maximize the exposure of the bin (as a form of P&E with residents) and capture of recyclables.

The most common contaminant found during our visual audits, was take out coffee cups. The City developed new signs to address this concern as a component of this project work. It was found that while there were still contaminants of coffee cups, it did seem to decrease post signage update.

It should be noted that the City of Stratford's City Centre Committee purchased 10 barrel type recycle bins to be used throughout the down town core for recycling. This added 10 more locations for the public to place recyclables.

Some of the recycle depots have flaps that cover the openings for people to place recyclables into the depot. Over the years, some of the flaps have fallen off and were not replaced. While doing the visual audits, it was noted that of the bins that did NOT have the flaps, more recycling was placed in those bins. Sometimes even overflowing the bins while the other bins that had the closed flaps, only 5% was filled.



The cost to collect recyclables from the downtown depots and new recycle bins is \$414.72 annually. City staff feel that the positive promotion of at home recycling behavior's created by providing recycling services in public spaces greatly outweighs the cost of this service. Indeed, the public space recycling program offers a relatively cost effective P&E tool for interacting with residents on a continual basis.