

***Final Report***

**CIF#828.5 & 828.6**

**Township of South Stormont**  
Large Curbside Containers, &  
Small program P&E plan implementation



**Final Project Report**

**September 25, 2015**

**Township of South Stormont**

**CIF Project Numbers 828.5 & 828.6**

## *Acknowledgement:*

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## 1 Executive Summary

This is the final report of a project implemented by the Township of South Stormont between September, 2014 and March, 2015. The project goal was to distribute new larger Blue Boxes to residents of the community, increase participation in the Blue Box Program, increase diversion of Blue Box materials and manage contamination of the Blue Box stream. Financial and technical assistance was provided by the Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF) in completing the project.

On September 24, 2014 the municipality created and began implementation of a communication plan for the Blue Box recycling program. The plan included the distribution of new larger Blue Boxes for residents. During the first year of implementation, the municipality implemented the following promotional & educational (P&E) tactics: The Blue Boxes were scheduled to be delivered during the first two weeks of December, 2014, but there was a delay due to issues which took manpower away from the project midway through the delivery. However, distribution was complete by end of December. A brochure was included with each box distributed.

In January and February of 2015, the Township distributed 17 Recycle Carts (95 gal) to multi-residential units along with 129 recycling bags to be distributed to each tenant. In September of 2015, we distributed 3 more carts and 21 bags for a total of 20 carts and 150 tote bags distributed. The tote bags also included our recycling brochure. We have also changed the pick up at several multi-residential buildings to weekly, instead of bi-weekly, and have seen a significant increase in the amount of curbside recycling at these locations. We are working toward a 100% participation rate for all multi-residential buildings in our Township.

In order to assess the impacts of the new Blue Boxes and the promotional and educational outreach, the Township of South Stormont has completed the following measuring & monitoring activities: A Blue Box survey of 100 homes and 2 apartment complexes was completed between September, 2014 and March, 2015, to monitor any changes to the amount of curbside recycling. The survey indicated that 80% of residents of single homes set out their Blue Box prior to delivery of the new Blue Boxes. After delivery, the average set out rate increased to 85% for the same 100 homes. Overall, after distribution of new larger Blue Boxes, there was a 2.4% increase in the total tonnage collected in the Township over the same period in the previous year.

The Township of South Stormont plans to continue striving to increase set out participation as well as increase diversion rates. One of the strategies to accomplish these goals is to provide Blue Boxes (replacement of damaged or lost boxes and to new residents) at no charge. We will also continue to promote the Blue Box program through our newsletter and Waste Management Calendar.

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## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Municipal Background

The Township of South Stormont provides single-stream curbside collection of recyclables to all its residents including single family and multi-family development. The total number of residential properties that received bi-weekly collection of recyclables in 2014 is 5,252. Collection service is provided by Township staff. Materials are trucked to a contractor in Cornwall, Ontario for processing.

Total Population	12,617
Households (single family)	5,191
Households (multi-family)	136
Blue Box Tonnage (2014 Datacall)	706 MT
Municipal Grouping	7
Blue Box Program net cost (2014 Datacall)	\$272,357
Net cost per tonne	\$386
Annual P&E Budget	\$11,820

Standard procedure for providing/replacing Blue Boxes in the Township is to issue two free Blue Boxes to each new homeowner. We also replace, free of charge, boxes that have been damaged or lost. Blue Boxes are sold at cost to residents who request extra units.

### 2.2 Project description

In November 2014, the Township relaunched its recycling program in an effort to increase participation and divert more blue box recyclable materials from landfill. The Township provided new larger Blue Boxes for single-family dwellings and 20 recycling carts (95 gal) to 14 multi-residential (MR) buildings. Along with the carts, we distributed MR promotional kits to each tenant (150 units total), which included reusable recycling bags and a brochure explaining the purpose of the bags and promoting the program. Other relevant information related to this project work is presented in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Project Summary

Item	
Number of Blue Boxes distributed	5160
Number of 95 gallon carts distributed	20
Number of Municipal Blue Bags distributed	150
Dates delivered (start and end)	December 1, 2014 to September, 2015
Increased annual tonnage attributed to new Blue Boxes	2% increase in curbside collection for period of January to August, 2015 compared to same period in 2014.

## 2.3 Promotion & Education (P&E)

The distribution of the new Blue Box was advertised in our Monthly Newsletter, and published in the Seaway News which is distributed to every home in the Township. The Township advertised the distribution of the new boxes in our Newsletter in October, November and December, 2014.

In January, we contacted all owners of multi-residential units within the Township offering them free 95 gallon carts for their buildings along with Blue Bags for each of their tenants (pictured right)

Attached in appendix A of this report are samples of the P&E used by the Township in communicating the program relaunch to residents. The P&E tactics included:

- A Brochure to educate and inform residents where Blue Boxes/bags were available; at office reception area
- OOPs Stickers to notify residents when unacceptable materials have been placed in the Blue Box for collection.
- Township Monthly Newsletter (Seaway News), October, November, December, 2014
- Updates to the Township website November 21 – 30.



## 2.4 Method of Container Distribution

Township employees were used to distribute the recycling boxes door to door on the regular collection days during December, 2014. The delivery of the Blue Boxes on the regularly scheduled collection day helped to ensure that no one was missed. As part of the delivery, the Township included P&E material which listed recyclable and non-recyclable items, as well as what happens to recyclables after pick up at the curb. Delivery went very well; however, the initial plan to distribute all the boxes over a two-week period (first two weeks of December), was delayed due to Public Works issues which took manpower away from the project midway into delivery. This generated some calls from residents who were concerned that they hadn't received their box. However, by the end of December all boxes had been delivered. We received some feedback from residents thanking us for the boxes and brochure.

95 gallon recycling carts, along with recycling bags and promotional brochures, were delivered to multi-residential buildings by Township employees. Most tenants who were participating recyclers were using individual recycling boxes, which are cumbersome and difficult for them to manage on stairwells, especially seniors. We received very positive feedback from building managers who indicated that their tenants were very pleased to have a more efficient and cleaner method of handling their recycling (recycling bags). Because of increased participation, it was decided to initiate weekly recycling collection at several multi-residential buildings using the 95 gallon carts.

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION

#### 3.1 Goals and Objectives

**Increase participation in the Blue Box program:** Participation in the Township’s recycling program was not previously tracked or known. In the fall of 2014, municipal staff were tasked with monitoring the set-out of recyclables for pick up. This baseline estimate of participation and set-out was used to evaluate the effectiveness of P&E and other Blue Box related programming. The Township set the objective of increasing participation in the Blue Box program by 5% by 2016 following distribution of the new Blue Boxes and P&E Efforts.

1. Curbside: The current diversion of Blue Box materials as reported in the 2013 WDO Datacall was 698 metric tonnes. The Township has set the objective of increasing this tonnage to 733 metric tonnes by 2016, a 5% increase in materials diverted from landfill through the Blue Box program.
2. Multi-Residential (MR): Traditionally, the amount of Blue Box materials recycled from residential apartments has not been tracked by the Township. The Township has established a goal to increase the diversion of Blue Box materials from this sector by 5% following the distribution of the new Blue Box recycling carts and P&E efforts. In addition to the implementation of recycling carts at the MR buildings, 150 informational totes to transfer recyclables have been distributed to promote and encourage recycling.



**Manage contamination of Blue Box stream:**

Residents have been provided with additional container capacity and are being encouraged to recycle more Blue Box materials. This will likely increase the amount of contamination in the Blue Box stream. To manage contamination and, therefore, avoid additional costs for processing materials, the Township introduced the use of OOPS stickers. These stickers inform residents that the recycling collector could not empty all the items in their recycling boxes because they contained non-recycling items.

#### 3.2 Messages Used

The Blue Box P&E targeted all residential households that receive recycling services from the Township. The main messages for the three stages of the new containers rollout were:

- New Blue Boxes are Coming
- Recycling: It’s No Waste of Time
- Control Contamination

The focus of the plan was to integrate the new Blue Box containers into the program, promote participation, and create awareness of the program’s acceptable materials.

### 3.3 Tactics Utilized

To support the Blue Box program relaunch, staff created a comprehensive P&E campaign to inform residents of the upcoming container deliveries and encourage participation. The key P&E tactics used are outlined in the following sections, additionally the budget for this campaign is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: P&E Implementation tactics, targets, and respective costs

Tactic	Description	Budget	Actual
Brochures	Designed by Admin - Included with distributed Blue Boxes and bags	\$ 5,116.00	\$ 4,944.18
Website	Township Website News Event, FB updates	N/A	N/A
OOPS! Stickers	Designed by Admin - Distributed by Recycling Truck Operator as needed –	\$ 1,430.00	\$ 1,335.12
Newsletters	Seaway News	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 6,579.30</b>

#### Newsletter/Brochure

Both the newsletter and brochure informed residents of how the recycling program helps improve waste diversion while continuing to stress the importance of sorting the recycling properly. It also emphasized certain materials and how they are recycled (such as aluminum) while informing residents of the overall goals of the program and how close they are to being achieved. The artwork and messaging of the brochure was produced by Township staff and printing was outsourced. The Township provides a monthly Newsletter update to the community through the Seaway News, a free publication that is delivered to homes weekly. The newsletter information is produced monthly by Township staff and submitted to TC Media for final design, print-out and delivery.

#### Website

Websites and social media are an effective and quick method to communicate Township events and updates, it is an environmentally-conscious choice which fits with the messaging around recycling. Township staff maintain a website and Facebook account. Regular updates are posted regularly on the website homepage and uploaded to South Stormont's Facebook page which currently has 880 followers. Both outreach methods are used to provide motivational and informative messaging to residents regarding Blue Box initiatives such as:

- Community recycling statistics
- How to shop recycle friendly
- Recycling tips and tricks to make recycling easier
- Benefits of recycling to the environment
- Examples of products made from recycled materials

## OOPS Stickers

The “OOPS” stickers are used to inform residents that the recycling collector could not empty all the items in their recycling boxes because they contained non-recyclable items. The stickers are a direct educational tool that help minimize contamination in the recycling stream.

Staff are proud to note that the P&E activities planned were either completed on time or ahead of schedule as presented in Table 4 on the next page.

Table 3: Implementation schedule, proposed versus actual, of P&E tactics and activities

Task	Description	Timeline	Actual
<b>2014 – Brochure (creation only)</b>	Create content, print	December 2014	November 2014
<b>2014 – Website</b>	Announcement	November 2014	November 2014
<b>OOPs Stickers</b>	Create, print	December 2014	October 2014
<b>Newsletter</b>	Create, print	November 2014	October 2014

### 3.4 Project Budget

The Blue Box program relaunch included the purchase, delivery, and distribution of recycling containers to single family and MR households, in addition to the P&E campaign discussed previously. The costs to complete this project work are presented in Table 3, below.

Table 4: Project Budget

	Per unit cost	Quantity	Total (cost x quantity)
Blue Box	\$ 5.65	5,160	\$29,154.00
Delivery	\$ 0.22	5,160	1,125.00
Distribution	\$ 0.9	5,160	4,667.30
P&E Costs	\$ <u>1.28</u>	5,160	6,579.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8.05</b>		<b>\$41,525.82</b>

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Project Tracking – Measuring & Monitoring

#### Blue Box participation

Participation was tracked through a set out rate of 100 houses in the Long Sault and Ingleside areas over three separate occasions between September, 2014 and March, 2015. Collection staff recorded the houses that participated in the recycling program between September and November. If a house participated at least once over that period, they were counted as participating. The third tracking period in March, 2015, monitored the use of the new 23.5 gallon Blue Box at the same 100 houses. The total number of houses participating was used as a sample of the community as a whole.

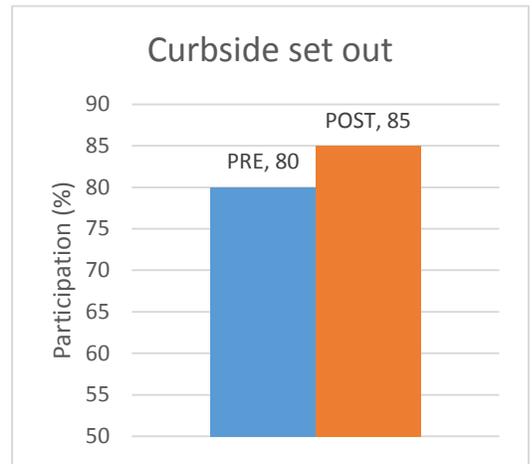


Figure 1: Participation pre vs post

The survey of 100 homes resulted in a 5% increase in participation rate after distribution of new Blue Boxes (Figure 1).

The Township also tracked the types of blue box set out during the post survey, this information is presented in Table 6, below. Nearly 60% of homes surveyed set out one of the new blue boxes purchased by the Township during the single collection.

Table 5: Residential Curbside Set-outs

Blue Box - Curbside Containers	% of setout
1 large Box, 1 Small Box	40%
1 large, only	17%
1 small, only	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>85%</b>

Two multi-residential buildings totalling 77 units (Dickinson Drive, Ingleside and Simcoe St, Long Sault) were surveyed over two consecutive recycling periods in October, 2014 and again in March, 2015, following delivery of the 95 gallon carts. The number of Blue Boxes, bags and cardboard bundles were tallied and the approximate volume of recyclables was estimated based on the size and number of regular Blue Boxes being used. There was a sharp increase at the Dickinson Drive building after 95 gallon carts and recycling bags were delivered.

Calculations of the increase in recycling rates at the one MR building that participated in the receipt of carts and totes resulted in an impressive **59% increase** from Fall, 2014 to March 2015.

The data indicated a low participation rate at the Simcoe Street building during the initial survey in October 2014. Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts to contact the building management, we received no response to our requests to provide 95 gallon carts and tote bags to the building's residents. However, we have recently made contact with the manager and carts and totes were delivered to the building in September, 2015. We anticipate an increase in the participation rate at this location as a result.

### Blue Box Contamination

This monitoring was planned to track Blue Box contamination using OOPS stickers, which would be handed out by drivers to residents who don't sort their Blue Boxes properly. OOPS stickers were purchased and a spreadsheet was prepared. However, due to staffing issues, the tracking was not maintained and we are unable to provide statistics with regard to contamination.

### Blue Box Diversion

Monthly recycling tonnage statistics are provided to the Township from HGC Management Inc. and the City of Cornwall. Statistics from the first six months of 2013, 2014, and 2015 were used to compare changes to the tonnes of collected recyclables following the launch of the new Blue Box program presented in Table 5 below. Thus far, 2.4% more material has been collected in the Township during 2015 in comparison to the 2014 base year.

Table 6: Tonnes (kilograms) collected before & after delivery of Blue Boxes

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	6 month Total
2013	62.27	45.77	52.84	63.75	74.89	62.84	362.4
2014	62.32	46.56	50.89	60.07	76.68	62.17	358.7
2015	65.99	48.88	53.63	68.62	65.30	64.99	367.4
%Diff	6%	5%	5%	14%	-15%	5%	2.4%

## 4.2 Conclusions

The Township of South Stormont plans to continue striving to increase blue box participation and diversion. The results noted above are positive indicators that the program is improving. The investment in the new blue boxes has provided the needed capacity for our residents to store and set out recyclables for collection in both single family and MR households. To further this success, a strategy to achieve performance goals is to provide Blue Boxes (replacement of damaged or lost boxes and to new residents) at no charge.

The P&E plan helped staff prepare residents for the new containers and improve participation. We will continue to promote the Blue Box program through our newsletter and Waste Management Calendar.