

CIF Project # 137 – Quinte Waste Solutions – MRF Upgrades

Background

Quinte Waste Solutions (Quinte) MRF needed significant upgrades. The facility was backlogged with unprocessed materials and having difficulty with unscheduled downtime and meeting their residue targets. This project involved a set of capital upgrades that were intended to extend the life of the facility through to the end of the current contract (and any possible extensions). This investment provided relief for the contractor, positioned Quinte to accept more material, and bought time while decisions were made at a Provincial and local level about transitioning Ontario's Blue Box Program and its implications on the future of the MRF were considered. Rebuilding of the fibre and container lines provided Quinte with 5,720 tonne per year of extra capacity and resulted in higher net revenues through reduced operating costs. At the time, Quinte was processing an estimated 9,650 tonnes/yr of material so the potential to reduce processing costs and increase net revenue.

Summary of Results

The rebuild of the fibre and container lines was successfully completed. The upgrade reduced downtime from 50.75 days in 2011 to 4.5 days in the first four months of 2012. There were 490 uninterrupted days without any worker injuries after the rebuild. Bales of sorted recyclables were cleaner and well received by customers. On average, stockpiles of unprocessed recyclables have lessened and residuals meet the contracted percentages.

Financials

The total estimated costs, including contingency, to complete the scoped rebuild of the fibre and container lines was \$420,000. The actual project cost totaled \$470,000. Quinte requested \$235,000 from the CIF and was granted \$140,000 which represented approximately 33% of the project value.

Learnings

This project highlighted the evolving nature of processing Blue Box recyclables. Many of the Province's MRFs were built in the early 1990's with the belief that it would be a one-time investment in the community that would eventually become financially self-sustaining. The increasing complexity of consumer packaging has, in fact, made it necessary for facilities like Quinte's to undertake regular upgrades if they are to remain cost competitive. It is

recommended, therefore, that MRF's set aside a portion of their revenues from the sale of Blue Box recyclables into a capital reserve to finance regular capital upgrades.