

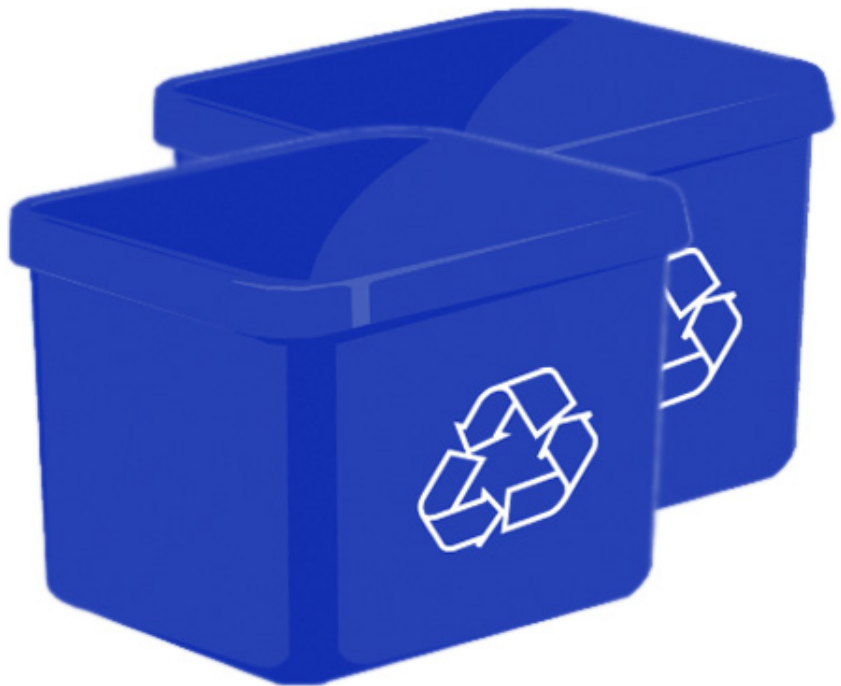
Stewardship Ontario Effectiveness and Efficiency Fund Project 105:

# ENHANCED BLUE BOX RECOVERY

## REGIONS OF

---

- DURHAM
- PEEL
- YORK
- CITY OF TORONTO



**McConnell Weaver**  
*Communication Management*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Recommendations .....	5
Study Method .....	7
Recruiting Specifications and Respondent profiles .....	8
<b>DETAILED FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Feedback on Community’s Recycling Program .....	10
Recycling in Multi-Residential Dwellings .....	10
• Overview .....	10
• Participation .....	11
• Bin Problems .....	11
• Lack Recycling Information .....	12
• Storage Challenges .....	13
Curbside Recycling .....	14
• Overview .....	14
• Up-to-date list .....	14
• Collector Feedback .....	15
• Respondents Have Their Doubts .....	16
• Frequency Of Pick Up .....	16
• Green Bin .....	17
Recycling – Likes and Dislikes .....	18
Rating the Recycling Program .....	20
Participation and Sorting materials .....	22
• Partner & Kid’s Recycling .....	22
Household Recycling Plan .....	24

Household Recycling Zones - Explain Your Recycling Plan . . . . .	29
Awareness Of Recyclables - Household Check List . . . . .	30
• First Generation Blue Box - Core Items . . . . .	30
• Neglected Items and Low Recycling Zones . . . . .	30
• Focus On Paper . . . . .	32
• Organic Waste & Backyard Composting . . . . .	32
Recycling Away From Home . . . . .	36
Future Options to Reducing Waste . . . . .	37
Improving Multi-residential Recycling Programs . . . . .	39
• Education and Promotion . . . . .	39
• Management Support . . . . .	39
• Financial Incentives/Penalties . . . . .	39
Other Suggestions: . . . . .	41
Written Suggestions for Increasing Recycling . . . . .	42
Excessive Packaging & the Role of Manufacturers . . . . .	44
Communication and Public Education . . . . .	45
Media Reports & Recent Messages about Recycling . . . . .	45
• Up To Date List of Accepted Items . . . . .	46
• What happens to recyclables? . . . . .	47
• How has your recycling program changed? . . . . .	48
Reaction to Recycling Ads – “Did you Know...” . . . . .	49
Suggested Message Themes . . . . .	52
Written Suggestions for Message Themes . . . . .	53
Reaching Recyclers – Communication Channels . . . . .	55
<b>APPENDIX – DISCUSSION GUIDE . . . . .</b>	<b>56</b>
Discussion Guide – Stewardship Ontario . . . . .	56
Wrap-up Discussion . . . . .	60

## BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto and the Regions of Peel, York and Durham - in collaboration with MGM Management as the project coordinator - applied for funding support to Stewardship Ontario's Efficiency & Effectiveness Fund (E&E Fund) for a project to increase the recovery rate of under-recovered recyclables in the "Golden Horseshoe" area. This target area consists of those municipalities stated above, plus the City of Hamilton and the Regions of Niagara and Halton. Together, this group of municipalities represents approximately 49% of total households (HH) in Ontario.

The project was recommended by Waste Diversion Ontario's Municipal - Industry Program Committee (MIPC) and approved by the Board of Stewardship Ontario in early 2005, as the Enhanced Blue Box Recovery Project - E & E Project # 105.

This project included two core research areas - technical research and communications research - and was comprised of eight different research projects (summarized below).

## TECHNICAL RESEARCH

In order to determine where available recyclables "resided," four technical research studies were approved under project 105. These were designed to provide supporting information to set priorities for targeting certain sectors of the waste stream, with a view to increasing recovery.

Study 1 - Examined (in cooperation with the Aluminum Association) the Inflow / Outflow of Used Beverage Containers (Project 105 Tech Memo #1)

Study 2 - Developed a protocol to sample and examine residual materials from Material Recycling Facilities (MRF) (Project 105 Tech Memo #2)

Study 3 - Examined the availability of recyclables in public space and school trash (Project 105 Tech Memo #3)

Study 4 - Summarized all data from waste composition audits, public space audits, MRF residue audits, and school recycling in order to estimate available recyclable segments in target municipalities (Project 105 Segmentation Analysis). This is the key technical research document from this project.

## COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

The second strand of research consisted of gathering information on householders' attitudes and behaviours regarding Blue Box recycling. This work was managed by McConnell Weaver Communication Management, who sub-contracted to Informa Market Research Co. Ltd. Two main reports – one focusing on qualitative focus group research and the other on the results of a quantitative (benchmark) telephone survey – as well as an Executive Summary of those two documents were produced by Informa. The fourth (and core) report in this area – the Strategic Communications Plan authored by McConnell Weaver – draws on both the technical and communications research and provides the overall direction recommended for the communications campaign. It includes communication messages aimed at specific segments of

the target populations where Blue Box recycling can be further optimized in the “Golden Horseshoe” area.

Copyright © 2006,

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, recorded or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photographic, sound, magnetic or other, without advance written permission from the owner.

This Project has been delivered with the assistance of Stewardship Ontario’s Effectiveness and Efficiency Fund, a Fund financed by Ontario municipalities and stewards of blue box waste in Ontario. Notwithstanding this support, the views expressed are the views of the author(s), and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Stewardship Ontario accept no responsibility for these views.

## EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

### Introduction

Six focus groups were conducted with 41 participants – 26 curbside recyclers and 15 residents of multi-unit buildings. The six groups were made up of two groups each from Toronto, York and Durham regions. The sessions were held in November 2005. Following are the results.

### KEY LEARNING POINTS



Recycling is a core function of household maintenance in the GTA, regardless of what type of built form residents occupy. Nonetheless, there is no level playing field for GTA recyclers. Curbside recyclers have a more convenient service and most have the tools to do a good job, whereas many residents of highrise buildings must contend with hard-to-access bins and a lack of essential tools.



Residents who recycle using the communal, multi-unit systems have no role to play in its design or operation. Even the most committed recycler, the ‘true believers,’ can be challenged by an inadequate system (too few recycling bins, contamination, etc.), no list of current recyclables, no feedback on their performance and an indifferent building superintendent. And those who are lackadaisical about this task have the option of doing little or no recycling. The latter group have many excuses not to bother separating their waste; the siren call of the easy-to-use garbage chute beckons.

### Keeping up with Evolving Programs



Recyclers are aware that the curbside program varies for each municipality. While there is inherent competition between regions, programs that now collect organics are seen by most to be advanced and most effective in reducing waste that goes to landfill. Green bin users have adapted well to separating the new stream and recyclers from York and Durham regions tend to be anxiously awaiting its introduction in their community.






The continuous improvement model that applies to blue box recycling is endorsed by most recyclers; the prospect of reducing garbage makes good sense and is good for the environment. However, there is quite a gap between supporting the concept of adding more materials and actually keeping up with them. The waste sorting job is getting more and more complex for household recyclers, given the increasing list of recyclables. This situation is exacerbated by the seemingly continual introduction of new types of packages made with new materials and the composite packs. And, to the disgust of many consumers, despite their best attempts to minimize garbage, manufacturers appear to be indifferent to the problem of excessive packaging.




New sorting guidelines encourage curbside recyclers in York, Peel and Toronto to commingle materials. Some residents are not aware of this new stipulation, and if they are diligent sorters may be disconcerted to note that collectors throw everything together in the truck – are their materials being recycling after all? On the other hand, some residents find commingling so much easier, enhancing the perceived convenience of the program.



## Participation & In-home Collection


-  The task of recycling is divided into two functions: separating recyclables from waste and then getting the recyclables out for collection. While some households view recycling as an equal opportunity task, many seem to operate along the traditional division of labour model. By default the female head of the household may be primarily responsible for setting up the internal waste separation system and ensuring that discards go in the correct location. Men, children and other household members may lend a hand in sorting their own waste, but this is not a given. Where men do play a roll is in moving the materials to the curbside or possibly to the building's recycling bins.
-  It is noteworthy that typically women are most engaged in recycling and overall have a more positive evaluation of the program, whereas men tend to be more critical. They appear to be easier to offend, finding fault with collectors and challenging the economics of recycling.
-  Since recycling has been introduced, the variety of materials that are accepted has mushroomed. At the outset, most of the 'first generation' items (bottles, cans and newspapers) could be found in and around the kitchen area. Today the list of recyclables covers materials that can be found in every room of the house, including the basement and the garage. Yet internal household collection systems may have been slow to adapt to the increasing volumes being generated in bathrooms, bedrooms, dens, etc. Hence, the recyclables are going straight from waste bins to garbage bags.


## Garbage Disposal

-  Many residents are aware that the waste they do not recycle is shipped to the United States. And while most respondents were not proud of this solution, they were relieved that it was not being landfilled near GTA residents/their community. Alternatives such as building a new landfill in a remote Ontario locale or introducing incineration (energy from waste) were mentioned, but there was no decisive support for a particular option. Clearly, most people do not know enough about the complexities of waste disposal to engage in a detailed debate about the topic – they expect government (the Ontario government was mentioned) will address the problem.


## Tools and Operational Matters


-  Most residents of multi-family building did not have a list of recyclables and had never seen one. They took their cues from the labels on the recycling bins and old habits. Committed recyclers complained that their buildings do nothing to promote recycling via posters, signage and community newsletters. The responsibility to separate waste is simply not mentioned, thus it is viewed as optional.
-  Recyclers in multi-residential buildings also lacked storage space and recycling bags or small bins to help organize materials and to act as reminders. Hence, the pattern with lazy recyclers to hoard materials such as papers for the monthly trip to the recycling bins and to dump all other items down the garbage chute.

 Some curbside recyclers are running out of capacity in their collection of blue boxes, noting that bigger boxes or boxes on wheels (akin to the green bins) should be introduced. The problem of excess recyclable items is particularly acute in Toronto given the biweekly collection schedule.

 Collectors are the frontline contact for municipal recycling programs. They perform an essential service and their actions are watched with much interest. Recyclers are reliant on obtaining clear signals from collectors and shape their sorting behaviour based on their ‘feedback.’

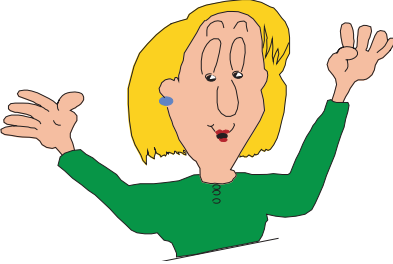


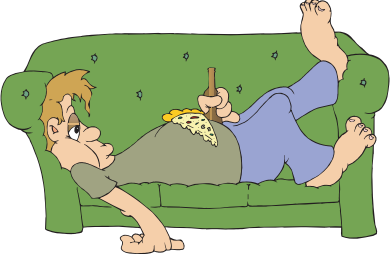
## Communication and Education

 Recyclers revealed, after examining a current list of recyclables, that they are missing some materials. Either they do not have a current list or they are still sorting and preparing materials based on old patterns. The outcome is that they are making more work for themselves than necessary (removing labels) and/or they are putting recyclables in the garbage (aluminium foil, some types of plastic packaging, tetrapak/aseptic containers, aerosol containers and empty paint cans).

 Despite residents’ commitment to recycling and the belief that it is the best solution for handling household waste, many people note that they are operating in an information vacuum. They do what they think is right with the tools they have and periodically get a new list of recyclables if they are curbside recyclers. But they never hear how the program is doing and whether it is achieving its goals. While most people assume that their recyclables are being used productively, they have little evidence to support this supposition. The silence on recycling’s achievements is thunderous.

### Segmentation of Recyclers:








The following segmentation of recyclers is based on insights from the focus groups and the market measurement study conducted in the GTA.

<p><b>“TRUE BELIEVERS”</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged, hold core values</li> <li>• Informed and active</li> <li>• Educators</li> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> <li>• Female skew</li> <li>• Welcome program improvements</li> </ul>	<p><b>“DOUBTERS”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on first generation items</li> <li>• Limited core values</li> <li>• Respond to community pressures</li> <li>• Can be motivated</li> <li>• Lack education/facts</li> <li>• Collection problems?</li> </ul> 
<p><b>“STRIVERS”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe in recycling/core value</li> <li>• Want to be good recyclers</li> <li>• Confused, lack information</li> <li>• Can be motivated</li> <li>• Missing tools (bins or list)</li> <li>• Collection problems?</li> </ul> 	<p><b>“DEAD BEATS”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycle little or no items</li> <li>• Lack core commitment/resistant</li> <li>• Motivated by negative ‘sticks’</li> <li>• Male skew with hostility</li> <li>• Disenfranchised/oppositional role</li> </ul> 



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### INCREASING RECYCLING







#### All Recyclers

-  Provide encouragement via feedback about what is being done with recyclables (currently it is left to speculation, aspirations and rumour). Develop mass media messages that promote the new uses that are being made from recyclables.
-  Communicate achievements and set targets on a region by region basis i.e. x% recycled in the blue box recycling program, X% more to go.
-  Education – the majority of recyclers were surprised to see the wide array of items that can be recycled, when they had an opportunity to review a list of recyclables.
-  Promote the new, convenient co-mingling feature and inform residents that the recyclables are sorted after collection.
-  Help focus recycling efforts and in-home diversion by using a room-by-room listing of typical items that can be found in specific rooms such as the kitchen, bathroom, laundry room/area/bedrooms, etc. (It is possible guide sorting or in-home allocation of waste baskets with data that indicates X% of recyclables typically are generated on a room-by-room basis?)
-  Respondents indicate that communication works; mass media messages are needed to remind, educate and encourage more diversion. Community newspaper ads and columns, staffed displays in malls and community events, posters in community centres.
-  Continue to promote recycling as an equal opportunity task, it's everybody's job to divert all recyclables that they use wherever they happen to be, providing tacit support for female household heads who tend to be the leaders.

#### Curbside Recyclers:

-  Examine blue box needs among curbside recyclers and the impact that large capacity bins could have on convenience and diversion levels.
-  Collectors should provide clear guidance, using 'Oops' stickers with details, list of recyclables. Provide collectors with education so that they better understand their role as both collectors and trainers.

### **Apartment/Condo Recyclers:**

-  Make program easier, encourage co-mingling. Place new stickers on the recycling bins that promote co-mingling. Also, place stickers on recycling bins warning residents against contamination i.e. No food waste, no plastic film/bags, etc.
  
-  Assess bin requirements and provide more bins if required, ensure that the recycling bins are located in a clean, well-lighted, secure area.
  
-  Provide education materials/lists/posters in common areas, elevators, and laundry rooms/a community, building campaign. If the building complex has a newspaper, provide articles about recycling, including tips from residents on making the task easier. Place recycling notices in garbage rooms and chutes.
  
-  Educate and encourage building superintendents to promote and monitor recycling
  
-  Monitor bin contents, providing feedback on errors/contamination.
  
-  Examine residents needs and potential impact that small blue boxes or bags can have on recycling levels.

### **Other Options:**

Other strategies that would encourage more recycling would include: promoting mandatory recycling, charge inefficient multi-residential buildings for collection after providing fair warning, limit and enforce the number of garbage bags.

## STUDY METHOD

A total of six focus groups were conducted in three Greater Toronto Area regions. Two sessions were held among residents of Toronto, York Region and Durham Region. The sessions included 41 people, 18 men and 15 women. Overall, 26 had access to curbside recycling and 15 had access to the recycling bin program.

### FACILITATION, FACILITIES AND RECORDING

All sessions were facilitated by the consultant according to a Discussion Guide developed by the consultant in conjunction with the project team (see Appendix 1). The Toronto sessions were conducted in a professionally designed research facilities equipped with a one way mirror and a client viewing area. The sessions conducted in Whitby and Richmond Hill were held in community centres; clients viewed the sessions via closed circuit television in an adjoining room.

### ANALYSES AND REPORT PREPARATION

Complete transcripts were made of all the proceedings; input from the self –completion questionnaire (Appendix 2) was tallied. The consultant then carefully reviewed the transcripts and tallies, and incorporated impressions that had been gathered during the course of conducting the focus groups. All this material was then analyzed and carefully distilled into the following detailed report.

### RECRUITING

Informa Market Research is a member of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (formerly the Professional Market Research Society), Canada's market research organization, and as such adheres to standards set by the organization. This includes engaging only recruiting companies that belong to the Central Files system, as detailed below. This ensures that focus groups conducted by Informa include only people who qualify and avoids the 'professional respondent' problem.



Central Files is a system of monitoring and tracking the participation of respondents in qualitative interviews and focus groups. It can also include any undesirable respondents reported by moderators as uncooperative or over-bearing. Every month recruiting firms submit the names and phone numbers of all respondents who attended a group or interview during the past month. While one recruiting firm can easily monitor the participation of respondents in their own database, it is impossible to ascertain whether a respondent has attended for another firm in the past month or the past 6 months. When each recruiting firm submits their attendees to Central Files, the lists can be cross-referenced and abusers are highlighted. Central Files checks by phone number and first and last names, even if the name is similar (i.e. Brown/Browne). If a match is found in any of the three categories, the name goes on the "Do not recruit again" list. This list is sent monthly to all recruiting firms who regularly submit to Central Files.

MIRA has established Rules of Conduct and Good Practice. The Central Files System represents that commitment to excellence and self-monitoring for qualitative researchers. It has been ongoing since 1983 and is the only system of its kind in the world. The fact that it is controlled by MIRA and maintained by an independent data management group gives legitimacy and security to the industry.




## RECRUITING SPECIFICATIONS AND RESPONDENT PROFILES

A total of six focus groups were conducted in three GTA centres: two in Toronto, two in York Region (Richmond Hill) and two in Durham Region (Whitby). Each set of two groups were recruited according to the following criteria: One group of women and one group of men/heads of households, age range between 25 and over (including retirees), half of households have children under 21 years living at home.

In York and Durham:

-  Half of each group included people living in single/semi's/terrace (access to curbside recycling) and half live in multi-unit buildings
-  Respondents live within designated postal code areas.

In Toronto:

-  All groups of people living in multi-family building had moderate income levels
-  ethnic mix of selected geographic
-  Respondents live within designated postal code areas.

N=26 Curb side access

12 men curb side access

14 women curb side access

N= 15 Bin Recycling program access

7 men bin recycling program access

8 women bin recycling program access

## A summary of respondents:

Please indicate how many of the following you usually put out for collection:

No. of items	Men Blue Box(es)	Women Blue Box(es)	Men Garbage Bag(s)	Women Garbage Bag(s)
1	6	2	4	5
2	5	9	7	9
3	5	5	3	1
4	-	1	2	1
5 +	-	-	1	2
Not specified	-	4	-	5

Type of residence	Men	Women	Total
Single detached House	7	12	19
Semi detached	2	1	3
Terrace or row house	1	-	1
Apartment in house	2	1	3
Apartment bldg with less than 6 storeys	2	2	4
Apartment bldg with more than 6 storeys	5	6	11

No. of people In Household	Men	Women	Total
1	1	2	3
2	4	5	9
3	7	4	11
4	5	10	15
5	2	1	3
6 +	1	-	1
Average	3.3	2.5	2.9

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### FEEDBACK ON COMMUNITY'S RECYCLING PROGRAM

#### RECYCLING IN MULTI-RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS



##### Overview

Overall, multi-residential dwellers living in the GTA reflected a wide range of recycling behaviour. Some residents appeared to be quite committed to the concept of recycling even if they were hamstrung by the inadequacies of their particular building's system, while others were clearly engaged in a half-hearted or, sometimes, minor way. This latter segment tended not to be motivated to separate their waste. All the cues around them indicated that recycling is of minor importance – it is not an integral part of their job as a tenant and resident. It is strictly voluntary with no penalty or inducement to recycle, unlike curbside recyclers who declare their commitment by the extent of their separation. The problem is particularly acute in highrise buildings where the recycling bins are located at grade and require an elevator ride; using the garbage chute is too convenient.

*I find with the apartments, nobody cares exactly what you're putting into what when you're in a big apartment. People just tend to throw anything —because nobody wants to go down the elevator.*

Participants who lived in smaller, low-rise buildings reported mixed patterns; some residents work together to recycle their waste while others noted that their neighbours simply did not bother to recycle.

*They throw garbage. They use what's closest to them. I see people walking out of my building, and they see the ones that are on wheels, and they just lift up the lid and throw their garbage in and they're gone. People don't think about the big bin to throw their garbage in.*

The issue of commingling was mentioned by a few tenants who kept an eye on the city collectors. They noted that separate recycling bins was pointless, given that all recyclables are dumped together in the truck and then, they assumed, were sorted at a later point. Consequently, these residents questioned why separate recycling bins were required for the different materials – wouldn't it be easier for residents if they did not have to separate their recyclables? One respondent who lives in a condominium complex reported that their management company had instructed residents not to sort recyclables which made it easier to participate in the program.

Positive examples of recycling were recalled by tenants in spite of the limited success of multi-residence recycling programs compared to curb-side. Some buildings have dedicated recycling rooms, others post signs on the garbage chutes reminding residents to recycle. In this instance, superintendents usually were pro-active about recycling and separating waste.

*Yeah. We just have the one chute for garbage, and then we have like the big – I don't know what you call them – downstairs in the basement. We have to take our recycling down. But every weekend you always see people. The rooms are always open and people are always traipsing*

*in and out doing their recycling for the weekend. And we have a clothing one down there, too. (Toronto Women)*

*The bins? Yeah, we have to, because in the garbage chutes there's a paper saying you can't have this, you can't have this going down the chutes. But some people are so stupid, they don't read. They just say, "Okay. Well, ..." and down the garbage chute. (York Region Women)*

*They have a recycling room, and they have for glass bottles, plastic bottles, cans, jars, paper, this, that, and everything. (York Region Women)*

*Ours is not too bad. They've now suddenly got a second recycling for bottles, I believe it is. We've got two for bottles, one for newspapers, and then the rest is just regular garbage. (Toronto Women)*



## **Participation**

The level of recycling varied dramatically between respondents. On one hand, some multi-residential recyclers seemed to take pride in their dedication to sorting and diverting waste, while others simply could not be bothered. The latter group offered excuses and faulted the system because it required more effort than simply putting everything in garbage bags or down the chute. They also pointed out the lack of information and motivation to get involved.

*The only thing I actually recycle constantly is my junk mail, and that's because right by the mailboxes in our lobby is a recycle box. That's it. So I open it up and I throw it in there, but that's it. Pizza boxes fit in the garbage. I knew everything was pretty much recyclable.*

*I see people walking out of my building, and they see the ones that are on wheels, and they just lift up the lid and throw their garbage in and they're gone. People don't think about the big bin to throw their garbage in. (Toronto Men)*



## **Bin Problems**

According to respondents, some buildings have increased the number of recycling bins; unfortunately, however, this was not widespread. It would appear that many buildings simply aren't providing enough recycling bins or the bins are not clearly marked for the separate materials. For instance, a dweller in a 70-unit Toronto apartment building reported that they had three recycling bins, two for bottles and cans and one for paper, and four big garbage bins. From her perspective, there were too few recycling bins. Other examples of limited capacity were noted by both apartment and condominium residents.

*Yeah. We only have two. We only have two bins downstairs (100-unit building). So even for the whole building, by the time you get down there, it's filled with maybe some recyclables, half garbage. By the time you get down, there's no room for you to even put your recyclables and stuff in there...So your recyclables end up going in the bin regardless. So we need a bigger system or a better system in my building, because it's not big enough.*

*We have six bins, and, boy, they're only out there two or three days and they're filled...400 units, yeah.*

Also, those bins that are in place are often not well maintained. Respondents reported that their waste disposal area was quite unsavoury; one facility was overrun with rats, for instance.

*Our garbage is at the side of the building, and you've got that, you've got the rats, you've got the raccoons in the garbage. It's bad enough that the garbage is building up. (Toronto Women)*

The other factor that deterred participation was the contamination that residents could easily see. When they peered over the top of the bins it held lots of regular garbage, crowding out the capacity that should be reserved exclusively for recyclables. The implicit message to those who make the effort to recycle was, why bother?

*The bins were always overflowing every week. There wasn't anywhere to put the stuff. (Toronto Men)*

Limited capacity for recycling and garbage was identified as a problem by some residents. For instance, one tenant reported that the composition of their building had changed with more families and children, meaning more garbage had to be stored. The number of bins and the bi-weekly collection needed to be altered to address the problem of overflowing bins.

A few respondents living in four- or six-plex buildings indicated that they had green organic bins. In one case the addition of organic waste to the diversion stream had addressed the problem they had with raccoons attacking garbage bags; however, another resident complained bitterly about the smell of rotting garbage and clever raccoons who could pry the bins open. One woman reported that a 16-unit building now has organic collection, but that it's impeded by residents who tossed bags of garbage in the bins. Also, she complained that the collectors simply fling the empty bins on the lawn, making a big mess.

Some participants mentioned that the best solution for providing maximum convenience for residents to recycle was the multi-chute system. Although it was seen to be a costly solution, they endorsed it for new buildings.

*I've seen the chutes, and I think it would be smart for them to have alternate chutes, like maybe three, one for recycling your paper, one for garbage and one for plastics.*



### **Lack Recycling Information**

There is an urgent need to provide recycling information directed to people living in multi-unit buildings. Although the majority of respondents were aware of the recycling program, most had not received information telling them how to participate or what materials could be recycled. Or they were basing behaviour on an old list and clearly were not aware of the new materials that have been added to the recycling stream.

*In our place, they came around and stapled one on the inside of the cupboard doors. It's still there. It's been there for three or four years.*

Furthermore there were no recycling posters or notices placed in high-traffic areas such as the lobby, the garbage chute rooms on each floor, the laundry room or the elevators. Residents indicated that they would expect to see recycling notices posted in these locations, if building

management or the City were supportive of recycling. Clearly, residents were not expected to separate their waste.

*I personally find it's lack of information for the residents, because I live in an apartment. A lot of people don't know there's a recycling program going on, so I guess the city should do something. (York Region Men)*

*The building I'm in, the management is on site as well, so they're very involved that way in that they do help out and they do have an occasional meeting about once a year to talk about it. But they don't explain to you how to do it. They just say, "You're supposed to recycle." (York Region Men)*

### **Storage Challenges**

The issue of limited space and the challenge of storing recyclables were particularly problematic for some apartment residents. They simply did not have enough space to hold materials until they had time to visit their recycling bins many floors below. The solution for some residents was to divert the easy, insert items such as paper – in the following example, fibre was stored for a long period of time.

*29 floors, and there's probably 20 apartments a floor... Now, of course, there's nothing – there's nobody saying you've got to go down there (recycling room in the basement) and put your plastic on that side. I do, especially with the paper, because I find paper's the one thing we all seem to have lots of. It doesn't matter whether it's newspapers or circulars or cereal boxes, all kinds of stuff. There's paper. It's just amazing. So I have a big can that I keep in the corner and that's where I put all the paper, and about once a month I take it down and dump it in the bins.*

Some residents were organized using small blue boxes to collect their materials; however, others simply did not have this container to remind them to recycle. Also, others could not find merit in having a blue box because it had to be returned to their unit before exiting the building. It appeared that they were reluctant to make a special trip downstairs just to recycle.

*I have a blue box in my apartment, a smaller one. It's just by the door, so when I do have paper products or whatever, I usually just throw it in there and then, when it gets full, I'll schlep it out to the side of the building.*

There was brief discussion about a suitable storage container for recyclables with differing opinions about what would work most effectively. Currently, residents seem to rely primarily on grocery bags which they stuff with recyclables. This was seen as the best method because it is relatively compact and can be thrown in the recycling bin as they exit the building.

## CURBSIDE RECYCLING



### Overview

Curbside recyclers presented a more favourable review of their recycling program. Recycling is coupled with civic pride and neighbourhood identity. Many respondents were keen to describe their neighbours' recycling behaviour as well as reporting on their own activities. Clearly 'eyes on the street' boost community safety as well as diversion of recyclables. Those few households that do not recycle or generate many bags of garbage are viewed with suspicion.

The expansion of the list of recyclables was viewed positively as a sign that the program is advancing. Further, as householders became more effective separating their recyclables from waste, they were gratified to see how little garbage they generated. This was a great source of pride, providing an opportunity to boast that their new 'best performance' was now only one bag of garbage, down from two or three.

*It's good on my street. Everybody works on our street to put things out, so they're doing really well – on my street anyway. (Whitby Women)*

*Well, it used to be just number 1 and 2 plastics. If you put a ketchup bottle out there, it was still there the next day, but now it's everything. There's nothing that you can't throw away in the blue bin. (York Region Women)*

Overall respondents are pleased with the program; Toronto and Markham green bin participants lauded the introduction of organic collection. Once they got into the habit of separating food waste, they found that it was easy and reduced odours while saving garbage bags.

A few were concerned about the durability of their bins, which they observed were too flimsy to withstand the rough treatment by collectors. They had little sympathy for busy collectors who flung their bins on the driveway or front lawn.

*Recycling so far for us has been really good. The only problem I would say is the bins themselves. (Toronto Men)*



### Up-to-date list

Having an up-to-date list of recyclables was evidently critical to increasing participation. Many residents actively relied on their lists to help them sort through their household waste and the increasingly wide variety of packaging materials. Residents realized that they required a guide to help them navigate through the variety of items and usually posted it in a convenient spot for everyone to check.

*We have a list on our fridge, so if we're not sure, we check that list. (York Region Women)*

*We refer to it all the time. (York Region Women)*



## **Collector Feedback**

Collectors play a vital role by providing direct feedback to the recycler. While some residents reported that they had been embarrassed to find recyclables have been left behind with a note, they also viewed this as helpful. However, when they did not receive feedback from their collectors and items were just left behind, recyclers were either confused or annoyed. Was the collector in a bad mood? Or was he so busy that he didn't see the residual items? Should I stop recycling this particular material? Male residents in particular seemed to be angrier when items were left behind. Simply, curbside recyclers look to collectors to guide them with clear messages.

*And there's a whole bunch of stuff left still in the bin, although recently, with the change to pick up plastic bags, it's gotten better. They don't seem to be as selective. Basically, they're taking everything in there and dumping it. It could be the same guy is in a better mood now. (York Region Men)*

*I love those little "Oops!" stickers that they stick on when you put out (York Region Women)*

*They don't leave us a note. They leave it on the curb half the time, the broken glass or... You can tell when the recycle guy's gone by. If he drops a bottle, he don't pick it up. He just keeps on moving on down the street. (Whitby Men)*

On collection day, some participants observed with great dismay their neatly separated items being thrown together in one compartment. These residents were not aware that materials can now be commingled. The new system generated a mixed response: some residents welcomed this more relaxed approach, while others insisted that they would not alter their behaviour – they liked to sort items into different bins. (In Durham region, recyclables must be separated at the curb, while Toronto and York Region residents are able to commingle their recyclables.)

*One of the things I really didn't like was watching them pick up the blue bins when you separate the bottles and cans and your papers, and they put it all in one hole in the garbage truck. So what's the point of separating?(York Region Women)*

*I like the old way with the paper and the glass and nice and neat, and now it just seems such a mess, those two big blue boxes with everything in them. But you get rid of so much more, and the garbage itself is smaller. (York Region Women)*

A small number of Toronto residents indicated that they had a visit from the "garbage police" or the "garbage Nazis" Clearly, the participants were both annoyed and embarrassed to learn that their sorting habits were worthy of criticism. Also, it was unsettling to think that the City had the right to inspect closed garbage bags.

*The garbage police came around to the house. They put I think a yellow tag or something on the garbage saying – there was something in there that shouldn't have been in there, a bottle or something, and they have the garbage police going around checking your garbage.*



## **Respondents Have Their Doubts**

The absence of feedback about the successes and gains of the program generates doubt among some recyclers. Participants from the three GTA regions questioned if their items were actually being recycled. Some people went on to voice doubts or mentioned family member who believe that the program is a fraud. Others, particularly men, expressed a desire to better understand the financial workings of program. The kinds of questions they asked included: How much does it cost to recycle compared to using landfill? Is the sale of recyclables generating a profit? If it does, what happens to this revenue?

*I don't think everything you put in even gets recycled. It just fools everybody.  
(York Region Men)*

*I recycle and my mom says, "Why do you recycle? Throw it in the garbage." She's not big on it. She thinks it all goes in one spot and nobody ever collects it. (Whitby Women)*

*I'm excessively pleased with recycling. I'm just curious, where's all that money going? Are we recognizing the savings some place?(York Region)*

*The other thing that I see as a challenge is I'm not always sure that everything I put out is being recycled, that it isn't just being put in the dump. (Whitby Men)*



## **Frequency Of Pick Up**

Recycling collection frequency varies throughout the GTA. Some respondents happily reported that they now have weekly recycling pick-up increased from bi-weekly service. This increased frequency relieved considerable pressure and reduced the volume of materials that need to be stored. Several families, large waste generators, reported that they placed two or more blue boxes at the curb for collection every week.

*Recycling is better. It used to be every two weeks. Garbage is every week. The blue bins, you can use two or three, even four. (York Region Men)*

*It's weekly pick-up. You can put two, three – I've got three blue bins out every week. (York Region Men)*

*And the blue bin, my biggest complaint is the blue bin issue, because I need four blue bins, because they take it every two weeks. My blue bin's always full. Two days after they empty it, my blue bin's full. (Toronto Men)*

On the other hand, Toronto respondents who currently have bi-weekly collection are frustrated by having to stockpile it for so long. The solution they recommended was two-fold – increase the size of the recycling bins and collect these materials more frequently. As it is now, it would appear that some recyclables are being dumped into garbage bags when all the recycling bin capacity has been utilized. Households with large volumes of waste materials are particularly challenged by the lower frequency service.

Yet, some curbside recyclers dealt with limited storage capacity by putting their extra recyclables in transparent plastic bags; however, some residents were not aware that this solution was acceptable to collectors. They were particularly pleased to learn that all their recyclables could be commingled in one bag, reducing the supply cost.

## **Green Bin**

Most residents that had green bins spoke highly of this new addition to their recycling program. To their astonishment diverting the “wet” garbage was easy and had many benefits. One of the key benefits was that they have noticed a significant reduction of their household waste, pest problems and odours associated with the garbage.

*We had a raccoon problem until the green bin came out. Green bin comes out, no more raccoons, no more squirrels, because there's no more wet waste, kitchen waste in the regular garbage. My garbage has been reduced to nothing.*

*The garbage has been reduced, the green bin itself has helped the raccoon and squirrel problem. So obviously I'm putting less into landfills. The green bin stuff hopefully is going to someplace that's composting it and reusing it for fertilizer in Holland Mash or whatever.*

Even active users of backyard composters have benefited by having a break during the winter as well as being able to divert meat products and other items not allowed in these units. Now the ‘fair weather’ composter feels no guilt because they are not composting during the cold months.

*I'm at 9<sup>th</sup> Line and 16<sup>th</sup>, and I think it was at the beginning of the year that we started with the green bin. And one of the things that I've noticed is the smell. The green bin eliminates the smell. (York Region Men)*

*We compost in the summer, so it feels good to be able to keep on doing that in wintertime, too, and also getting rid of things like meat and fish, because we wouldn't ordinarily put that in the compost. (York Region Women)*

*The garbage has been reduced, the green bin itself has helped the raccoon and squirrel problem. So obviously I'm putting less into landfills. The green bin stuff hopefully is going to someplace that's composting it and reusing it for fertilizer in Holland Mash or whatever. (Toronto Men)*

Some green bin users questioned the fate of their organics – are they being converted to useful compost? Again, feedback about the achievements of the green bin program would be appreciated.

Despite the relative ease of using the green bin, the “yuck” factor needed to be addressed, hence the popularity of lining the kitchen catcher with grocery bags. As the following quote illustrates, even though residents might realize that introducing plastic to the organic stream created a problem, they still did so.

*The reason they don't want the bags in the recycling is because it gums up the machines really badly, and the green bin stuff unfortunately – and I'm guilty of it because I'm not going to keep this thing under my sink with kitchen waste in it with no bag.*

The preferred kitchen organic disposal route, handy garburators, was mentioned by several participants. They did not understand the rationale for banning this kitchen convenience.

## RECYCLING – LIKES AND DISLIKES

### THINGS PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT THE RECYCLING PROGRAM







Men	Women
The feeling that the environment is being helped. It makes me feel good to help the environment. Get clean environment. The program will create a better environment in the long run. Better environmental future. Benefits to the environment. (5)	The chance to save the environment. For the environment. Better future environment for kids. That it is better for the environment. Save the environment. (5)
Garbage reduction. We can produce less garbage. Reduce waste and garbage. Less garbage hanging around until garbage day. Get little waste is possible. (5)	Less garbage. Reduction in waste. I like the feeling that I'm doing something positive to curb the build up of garbage (3)
Being able to dispose of bottles, plastics and papers in an orderly fashion. Reusing products and being efficient. That the majority of our waste can be redirected to recycling or compost. (3)	I like the fact that there seems to be an increasing amount of items that can be recycled. Also, recycling seems to be made easier now. (3)
The recycling program eliminates the amount of garbage that is sent to the U.S.A. which translates to savings to the Canadian people. Less operating cost to handle garbage.(2)	Showing the recycled product makes e.g. can = shirt. Make clean environment, use for make another product. (example pop bottle = fleece shirt) (2)
Diversion form landfill, reutilisation of materials. It is saving land fill areas. (2)	The recycling program is beneficial to generation to generation. Saves on environment for our future children and pets.(2)
I see an improvement in my community with pick up of blue bins every week rather than every two weeks. That they expanded it to include more items and have weekly pickups. (2)	Saving on the landfill.
We are making a difference	3 different colour bins. Better green bins that don't open easy for raccoons.
It's good program.	Eliminates the total garbage in the can! It's great that papers especially are recycled!
It doesn't go far enough. The public had to be shocked into strict recycling, the land fills are a major problem and new site are becoming impossible to find.	Can be reused – garbage not wasted.
There is not much I like about my recycling program.	Makes me feel like I am contributing to the greater good.
At least we're trying.	Like the pictures and words on recycling bins. We are taking responsibility for cleaner environment.
Wet garbage bin (green)	It will save our children's future because it educates them.
-	I have learned a lot form the focus group.
-	If recycling that a good.
-	My recycling is being picked up too early in the morning. Less garbage bags every week.

## THINGS PEOPLE DISLIKE ABOUT THE RECYCLING PROGRAM

Men	Women
Not knowing for sure what will be taken or left. Lack of information and progress report. Lack of information, communicating on the progress. Not always clear if it is recyclable. (4)	No information about what happens to the recyclables. Most of this discussion has key information. Not enough info on what really can go into the blue boxes. Lack of education, not enough information about what to recycle and the effects it will cause if we don't recycle. Lack of adequate educational materials, follow up/ updates. (5)
No feedback of how the public is making this work. Household may not fully informed about the benefit for doing the program. Lack of imagination and tangible feedback benefits. (3)	Nothing.(4)
Cause inconvenience to sort things out. Not convenient enough. (2)	Takes a lot of space in kitchen sorting out the various products for recycling. Also not enough room in one blue box- at our home we need 3!! (2)
Seems like approach is wrong. Constant reminders get ignored.	Heavier boxes (blue) and bins. The trip to the curb and the heavy paper boxes. (2)
Too many rules and regulations.	Taking it down to the proper bins if you live in a high rise. Bins are full many times.
Not often enough!	The green bin animals get in too easy.
Paper and bottles should be picked up every week.	Who gets the profit? i.e. money?
Unable to recycle plastic bags.	Can be confusing. Newspapers – need extra box.
It doesn't go into the problem.	I think the bins are not strong enough and advertising for recycling is lacking.
My building is not serious enough or strict enough on wear tenants put their recycling products.	Need more colour, visuals.
Big companies should be held more responsible for recycling.	Take more time to recycle.
No.	No incentives for recycling like free recycling boxes.
I do not think that we should pay for recycling bins.	When new high rise apartments build that 3 different chutes one for each type of recyclable product.
The blue bins are open and I have seen loose papers blow out of it creating a mess on the streets	I dislike the fact that restaurants do not recycle.
Simplified the colour coding system, unified recycling colour coding program within different municipalities.	Too complicated.
The program is not promoted enough today. When the program was introduced in the 1980s there were ads everywhere.	That is has taken so long to evolve.
We should have more incentives for recycling.	-

## RATING THE RECYCLING PROGRAM

Respondents were invited to rate their recycling program on a number of factors, using a scale from one to ten, where one is the lowest score and ten is the highest score.

-  In most cases, women were more positive than their male counterparts – i.e., women were more satisfied with their recycling program and viewed it as playing an important part in reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill.
-  The highest score was for the role that recycling plays in reducing the volume of waste that households generate.
-  Communication/public education received the two lowest ratings – it got a failing grade for clarity (5.7) and for frequency (4.3).
-  While the addition of new items to the list of recyclables was usually applauded, translating this into action can be difficult for some family members. This point received a 5.9 rating.
-  Overall, GTA recyclers are moderately satisfied with the program's convenience – the 6.8 overall score was adversely influenced by apartment dwellers.
-  The collectors received a mediocre score of 6.4. Again, women were more positive about their service than the men, who are often responsible for curbside duties.

Ratings - 10 point scale, 1 to 10	Men Average Ratings	Women Average Ratings	Total Average Rating
The need for recycling to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill	7.3	7.7	7.5
Separating items into the different categories – i.e., blue boxes or other containers/boxes	6.9	6.9	6.9
Convenience of recycling	6.6	7.0	6.8
Overall satisfaction with your recycling program	6.5	7.1	6.8
Ability of recycling to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill	6.2	6.9	6.6
Ease of learning how the program works	6.4	6.7	6.5
Reliability of the collectors	6.2	6.6	6.4
Family members' ability to adapt to the recycling program as new things get added to the list	6.0	5.8	5.9
Clarity of the education materials	5.7	5.6	5.7
Frequency of getting educational information about our recycling program.	4.2	4.5	4.3

## PARTICIPATION AND SORTING MATERIALS

With a few exceptions, both men and women reported that recycling is a team effort. In various degrees everyone in the household is involved, from the head of the house to grandparents to the children – now many households are blended families or multi-generational. However, drilling deeper, it often was the case that it's the women/female household heads who separate the items while the men take out the recycling and household waste.

*He takes it to the curb, that's right. We'll share in taking it to the garage, depending on how quick the build-up is and who sees it at the time, but he takes it to the curb. And so when he takes it to the curb, that's when he ensures that everything's in its proper place, whereas I put everything according to the different bins and the bags and they just go in the garage. (York Region Women)*

*I'm the carrier, she's the separator, which seems to work out all right. (Toronto Men)*

*I take the garbage out, either down the chute or... As I said, once a month I have all the paper and stuff, then I take it down to the basement and dump it. (Toronto Men)*

*Yeah, it's a shared effort. My wife helps out. She basically puts it in a bag in the kitchen and I'll take that bag out to the bins in the garage. It's a tag-team effort. I don't think I've ever seen her go out into the garage to put it in the bins, but she does let me know what needs to go out. (York Region Men)*

The women appeared to be more involved with the daily sorting and processing of household wastes and the men rely on the women to inform them of changes to the recycling programs. In many households, the traditional gender roles apply to recycling.



### Partner & Kid's Recycling

Households with children reported a variety of patterns. Although most parents supported recycling, children may or may not be involved. Some youngsters and teens were habituated to recycle by firm parents, while others seemed to be more laissez-faire about it. Parental expectation varied considerably.

*My son, well, he's okay. He's not really producing a lot of garbage, but he's okay. We trained him right from the beginning when he was young, recycle, recycle, recycle. (York Region Men)*

*The kids are more diligent about it. They're more conscious about health and environment and all that, so they make an effort to make sure they put it out. (Whitby Men)*

Both male and female respondents mentioned that their children are involved to various degrees with household recycling. Parents are very supportive of their children playing an active role at home. But it was not an easy road, given that some kids simply did not care about it. This meant the diligent adults had to ferret through the garbage collection containers to find items that belonged in the family recycling bin.

*It's mostly me and my husband, but with my kids, I find I'm constantly going into the garbage and taking some things out. I keep telling them, "We've got a new program now with the green one," so I'm constantly on them with the Kleenexes. (Toronto Women)*

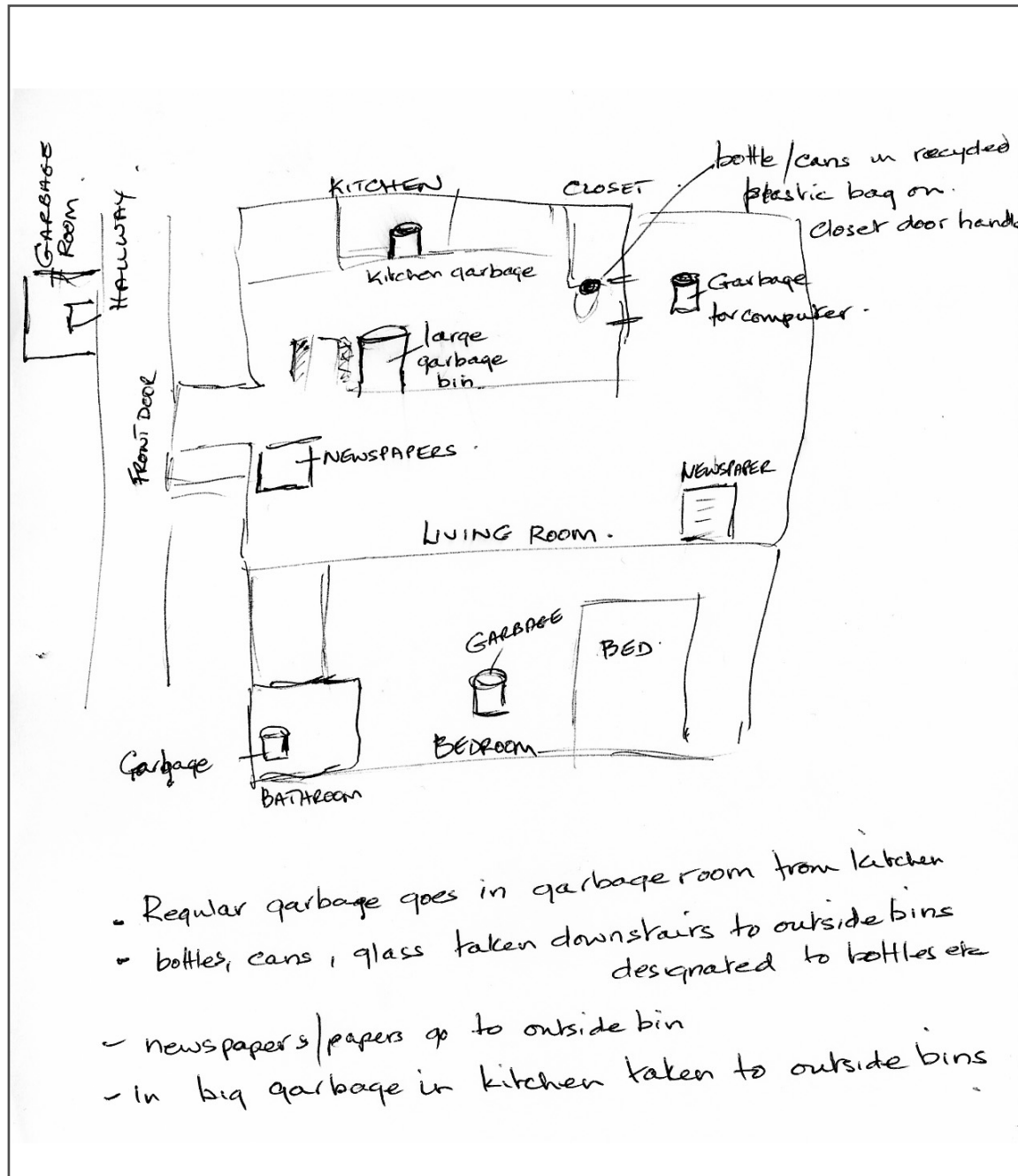
In some cases children were reluctant to assist with the recycling. In one instance, a teenage girl was very resistant to recycling because she was experiencing peer pressure not to do so: her friends at school thought recycling was not cool.

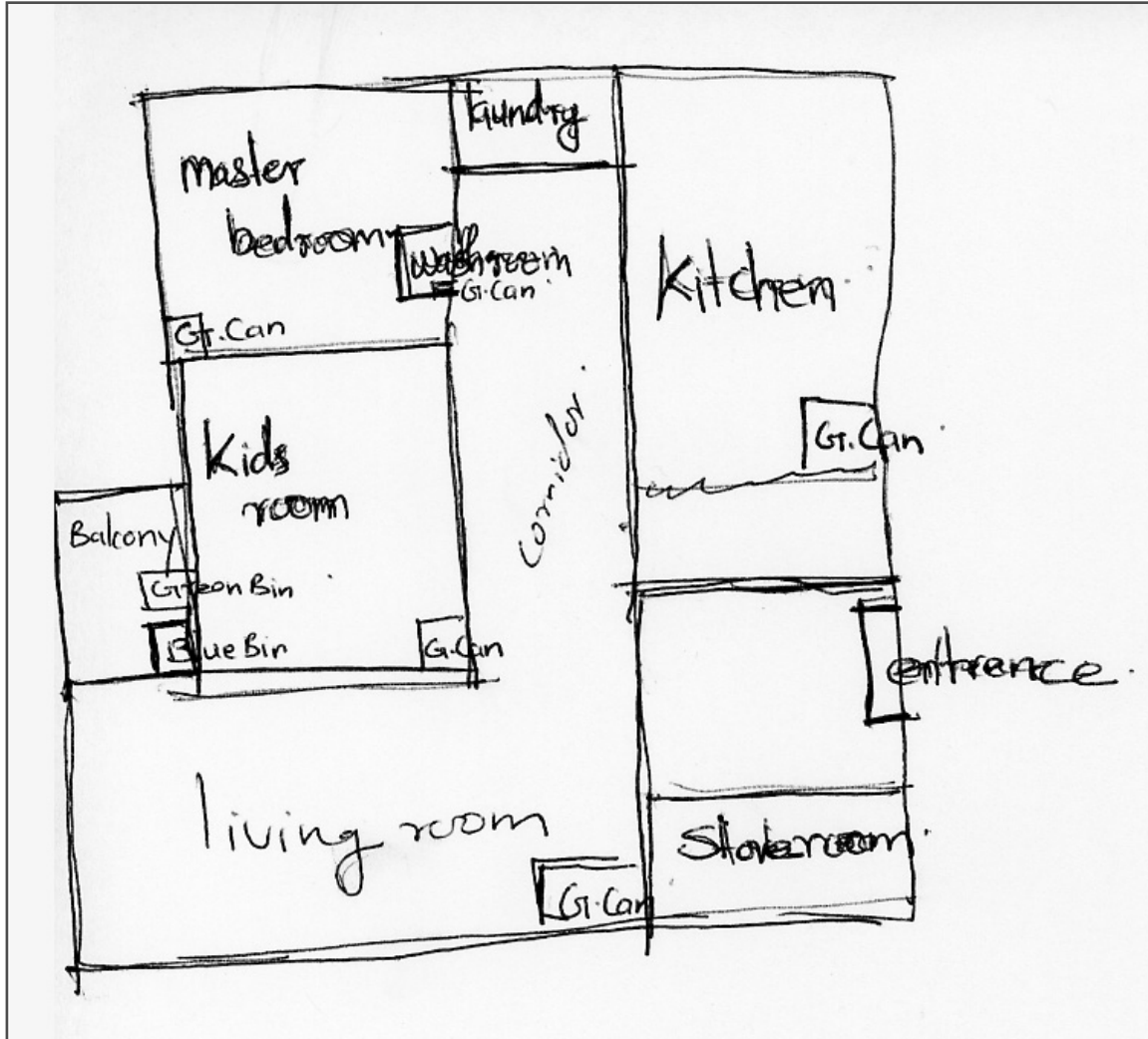
*...my daughter would start saying, "I don't want to recycle." They're all from the Durham area and they're like, "We don't do that at home." Most of them didn't do it, and so for a long time she resisted, saying, "Why bother, because we're the only ones who are doing that." (Whitby Women)*

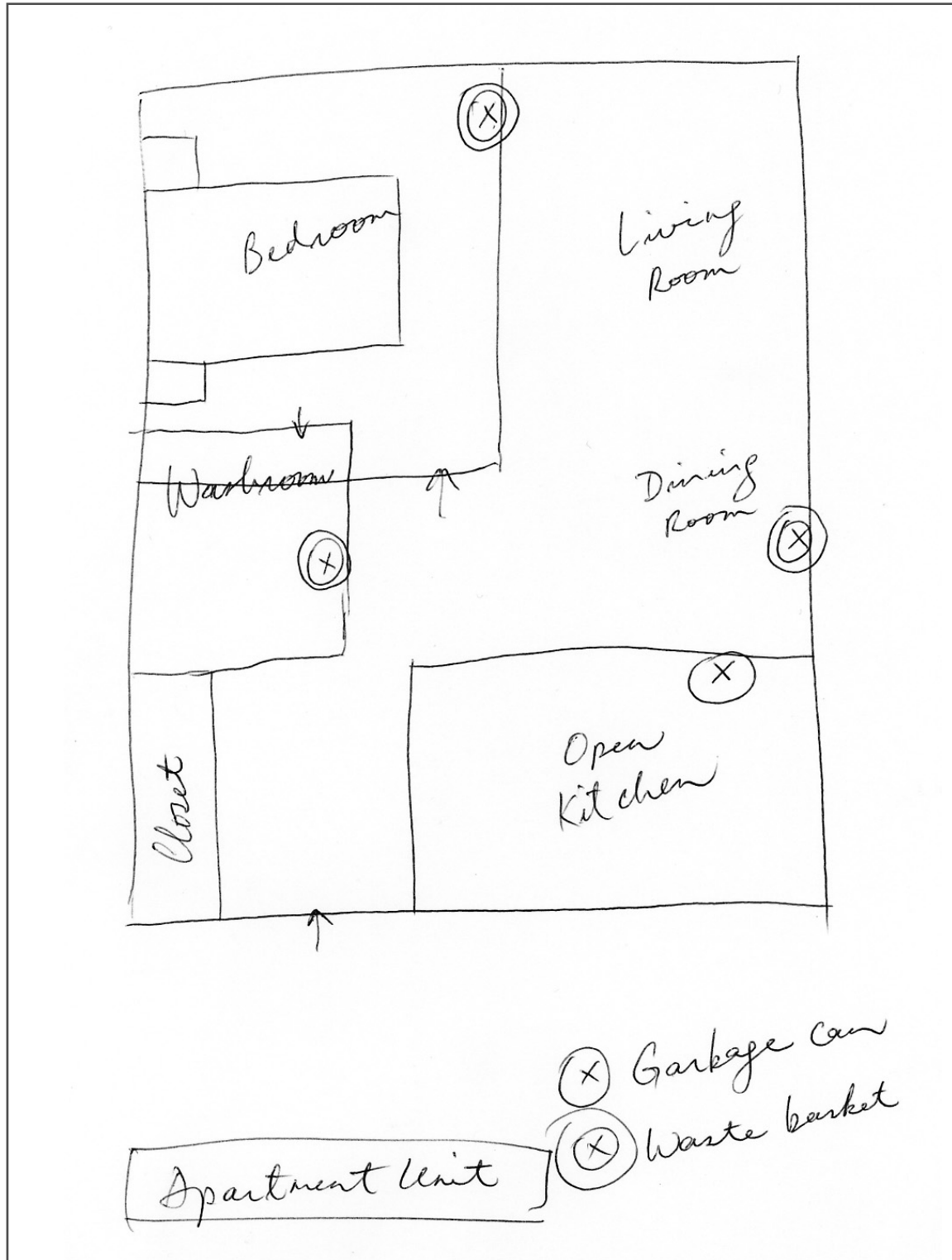
*Yeah. We have a blue bin. We keep it in the laundry room. The kids know where it is. I've never seen them use it, but it gets filled up. I know my wife, myself and my mother-in-law. I think the kids probably just leave it on the counter. (York Region Men)*

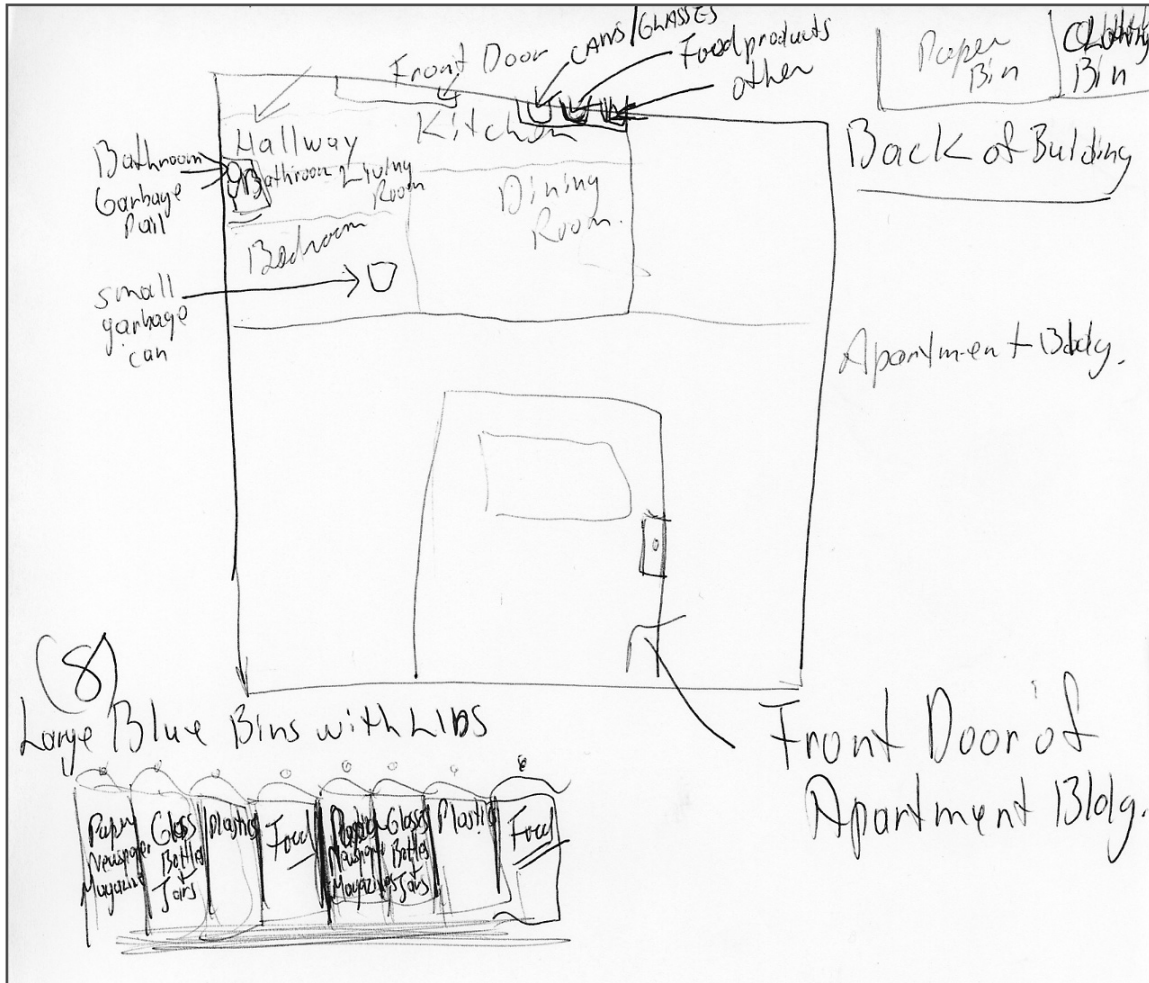
*I get my kids to help. They take it to the compost. They don't always like to, but they do. They do. (Whitby Women)*

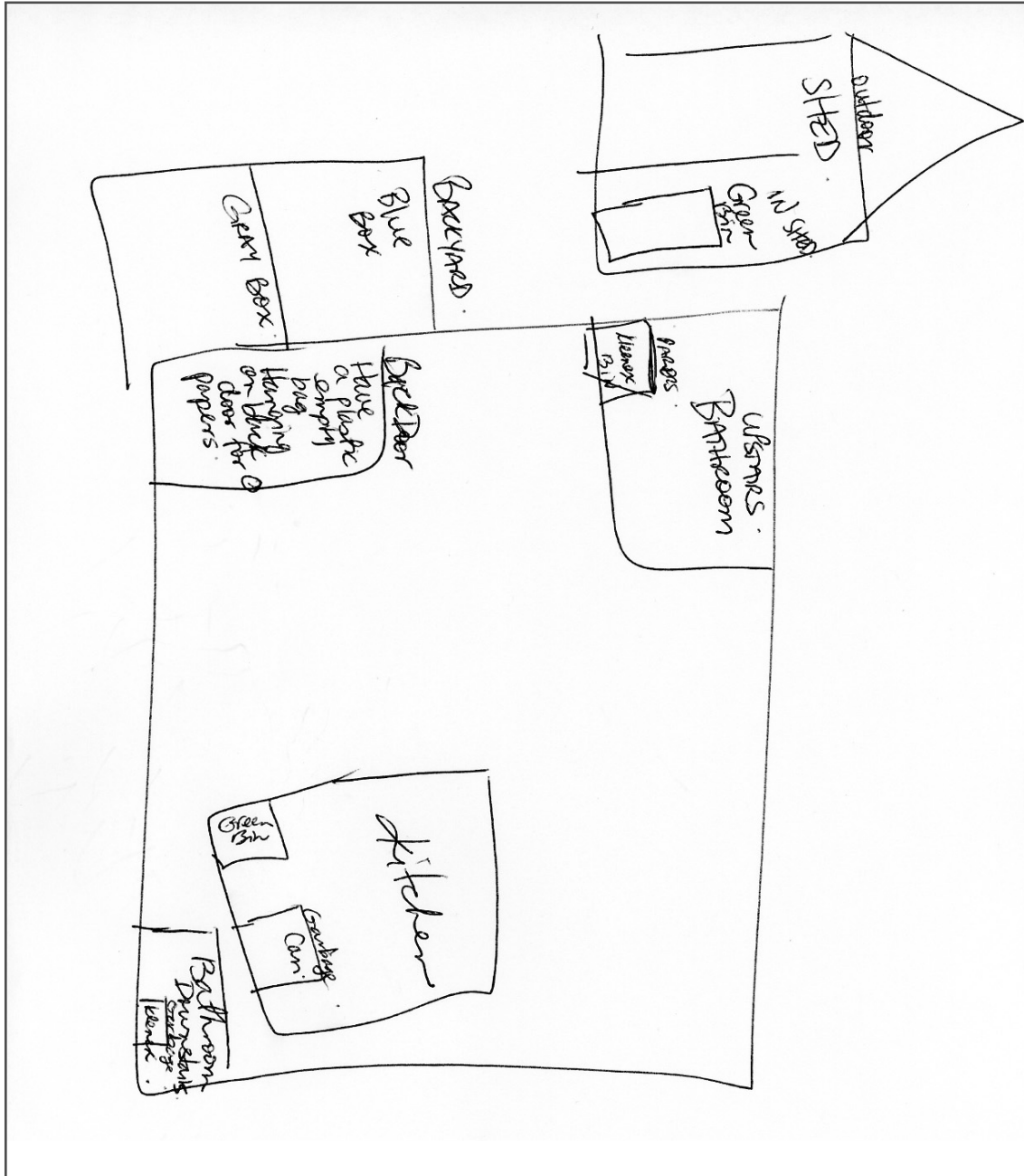
## HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING PLAN











## HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING ZONES - EXPLAIN YOUR RECYCLING PLAN

The women were asked to draw out their recycling based on a floor plan of their homes – where did they keep their blue boxes and small garbage containers? Unaided, respondents mentioned that the bulk of their recyclables comes from plastic bottles, newspapers and flyers.

An examination of their hand-drawn plans revealed a variety of different systems. For instance, some people had a blue box on each floor, while others left the recyclable items in strategic places to be collected once a week and put in the recycle bins. A few women had two waste baskets in each room, one for garbage and the other for recyclables. But in most cases, they had to sort the waste that is collected in the small garbage containers. While this second step took extra time, it reduced the number of bins. However, sorting through bathroom waste was an unappealing task for many women.

*Usually the bathroom bins, usually just the Kleenex and, for us, diapers. So everything goes in the green bin after that. Whenever we have little pieces of like cardboard from clothing tags or something like that, we bring it down to cardboard. (York Region Women)*

*I do have two waste baskets in our bedroom, because I know you're not supposed to put anything with make-up on it or nail polish remover or anything like that. So I have a smaller bin for that sort of thing, and then ours is the bigger one. (York Region Women)*

*We have a blue box upstairs, too, though. One of the bedrooms is like an office, and I have – it's not like the great big ones. It's more of an 8' x 11 size, which is perfect to put paper in. The papers fit perfectly in there, so that helps quite a bit. (York Region Women)*

*I put Q-tips and whatever else and the wrapper from the toilet paper in the kitchen garbage, but other than that, I just have – by my back door I just have a plastic bag and I just put the newspapers in there, and then my backyard's right there and whenever it's full I just throw it in the grey box. (Toronto Women)*

*We have three blue, because with all the recycling, we had to get extra, because the one blue box, or two even, wasn't enough. You start throwing in those cereal boxes and all the plastics in it, you need a lot more. We have the green and we have the garbage cans. (York Region Women)*

## AWARENESS OF RECYCLABLES - HOUSEHOLD CHECK LIST



### First Generation Blue Box - Core Items

There was widespread awareness that newspapers/junk mail, bottles and cans were recyclable; clearly these were the ones that were easiest to remember. However, some residents were still stuck on this list – they recycled all their newspaper and clean containers to the exclusion of other eligible items.

*For everything. I very seldom – and maybe I should be shot, but I can't be bothered to recycle. When I have newspapers, I throw them in the blue box. It's by my hallway...if I open cans and stuff, I can't be bothered rinsing them out, washing them. I'm chasing a 3-year-old at home by myself. I just don't have the time, I don't have the energy, I don't have the inclination. I just honestly can't be bothered.*

*The papers, the glass, in the kitchen like cereal and cracker boxes, no, they don't get recycled. They go in my big thing... Yeah. I have a big garbage, and things like that I chuck in there. I don't recycle. (Toronto Women)*

Some lazy recyclers simply refused to rinse out dirty food cans, while a small number of others said they couldn't be bothered soaking off the labels. Obviously their preparation knowledge had not been updated to the easier requirements.

*I take the labels off mine. That's why I didn't do it, because I thought you had to take the labels off. I haven't received any notices about what you're supposed to do or how you're supposed to do it. They used to say take the labels off, because that paper would end up in the glass. You had to —*

*That's why I didn't do it, because I thought you had to take the labels off. (Toronto Women)*



### Neglected Items and Low Recycling Zones

After the respondents went through the check list of recycled items, they were surprised by some of the items that are accepted in their program. The item that was most frequently mentioned was aerosol cans. Throughout all municipalities in the GTA, respondents were amazed that aerosol cans are accepted in their recycle program, although several people noted that they do not buy products in this type of container believing that they were hazardous to the environment (CFC propellant).

*Aerosol cans. I don't think you can recycle those. (Toronto Men)*

*Empty aerosol cans. I don't think you can recycle those. (Whitby Women)*

*Are those recyclable, aerosol cans? I never put them in the recycle, because I thought they weren't. (Whitby Women)*

*The aerosol. (Toronto Men)*

Other recyclables that surprised some poorly informed people were magazines (glossy stock), empty paint cans, envelopes (with windows), liquor bottles (Durham Region), tetrapak soup and drink boxes and aluminium foil.

Aside from the kitchen, where many recyclables are generated or gathered, the bathroom proved to be a rich source of these materials. Many respondents were shocked by how many items can actually be diverted from the bathroom - hand cream, soap containers, shampoo and conditioner bottles, gels, nail polish remover, vitamin and pill containers, etc. Men appeared to be less aware of the extent of grooming products used in the bathroom, possibly because women are the prime market for many of them.

*I don't recycle some of the bathroom stuff because I just dump it straight out.  
(York Region Women)*

*I was just noticing that, in the bathroom, I'm recycling less from the bathroom than I am any other room. Every other room I'm recycling about 100%. The bathroom I'm not. (Toronto Men)*

*You're basically saying that just about everything in the bathroom, with a few exceptions, can be recycled, whereas for some other people, that's just my bathroom garbage. And in that case, I might as well just take the whole bathroom garbage and throw it right into the recycle bin, because that's pretty much all it is. (Toronto Women)*

*Well, some of those questions about, the cough syrup bottles. I wouldn't recycle them, because some could be poison or whatever, like chemical. I just recycle some that I know that aren't harmful. (York Region Men)*

Presenting the recycling check list during the sessions proved to be a most useful aid to inform respondents about recycling possibilities throughout the entire house, in addition to the bathroom(s). The room by room list of recyclable items prompted respondents to rethink what goes into their bins every week and encouraged many to recycle more of their household items. It also made it evident for householders that their current small waste bins were not up to the separation job. There was particular interest in adding another waste bin in the bathroom; however, some residents wondered where it could possibly fit given the limited space. One suggestion was the bathroom bin should be divided – one half for garbage and one half for recyclables.

Also, when they thought it, about many recyclers were surprised by how many waste stream items are made from plastics. The ever increasing new types of plastic items led to confusion when it came time to sort household waste. Some eager recyclers simply put all those items that have a logo (arrows in a triangular pattern with a number) in their recycling bin, thinking that all types of plastics can now be recycled.

*I had a plant hanger and it had the recycling little logo on the back, and they didn't take it. I don't know if they took everything else, but they left it in my blue bin. I'm kind of upset. I'm thinking, but it has a logo. So I don't know why they did it...I thought if it has the arrow, it doesn't matter, because it's got a recycling... Oh, okay. There's something new.*

Plastic film and sturdy plastic bags were mentioned by diligent waste diverters – they were interested in finding outlets that would accept dry cleaning bags and the huge volume of grocery

sacks that most shoppers acquire. While they mentioned that the ideal solution was to carry cloth sacks, it was hard to break the habit of relying on free plastic bags.



### **Focus On Paper**

While the level of awareness was high that paper items could be recycled, some residents are deliberately not diverting computer print outs, letters and bills. Some of those who did not own a shredder felt that their personal papers were safer in the garbage, rather than an open blue box.

*That's an interesting one: computer papers. I think people would throw them in the garbage or through the shredder. (Whitby Women)*

*One thing our company's doing is all paper – we do [inaudible]. So from a privacy point of view, all paper has to go in a Shred-It box which does get recycled at the end of the day, but they shred them all, then Shred-It takes it and recycles the paper for us. So we've implemented that. There are no blue boxes in our office, in our company anyhow. So everything has to go in a Shred-It bin. Again, one, privacy, and, two, it forces them to recycle. (York Region Men)*



### **Organic Waste & Backyard Composting**

Organic waste was mentioned in the context of the green bin and similar organic recycling programs offered throughout the GTA. The green bin program was much preferred to backyard composting; only one respondent was actively using their back yard composter, while others had abandoned the practice totally or restricted it to yard waste in the warmer months.

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Bathroom - papers</b>									
News papers	19	20	39	-	1	1	-	1	1
Magazines	16	18	34	3	3	6		1	1
Paper medicine packaging	11	8	19	4	8	12	4	6	10
Toilet paper rolls	10	11	21	3	5	8	6	6	12
Toothpaste boxes	16	13	29	1	3	4	3	5	8

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Bathroom – containers</b>									
Empty aerosol cans: Shaving cream, Deodorant, Hairspray/mousse	8	9	17	3	-	3	7	13	20
Hand cream containers	10	15	25	4	-	4	5	6	11
Hand soap bottles	9	15	24	5	1	6	5	5	10
Shampoo/Conditioner bottles	10	14	24	4	2	6	4	6	10

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Bathroom - papers</b>									
Computer papers	15	14	29	2	4	6	1	4	5
Cracker boxes	17	19	36	2	1	3	-	2	2
Tissue boxes	18	16	34	1	4	5	-	2	2
Shoe boxes	15	14	29	3	4	7	1	4	5
Soft cover books	12	10	22	5	2	7	3	8	11

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Bathroom – containers</b>									
Cough syrup bottles	9	13	22	4	2	6	6	7	13
Pop bottles	17	19	36	2	-	2	-	3	3
Pop cans	17	18	35	2	-	2	-	2	2
Over-the-counter medicine and vitamin bottles	8	10	18	5	3	8	5	6	11
Water bottles	15	17	32	3	1	4	1	2	3

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Kitchen - papers</b>									
Cardboard boxes	18	20	38	1	-	1	-	2	2
Cereal/Cracker boxes	16	18	34	3	-	3	-	4	4
Coffee take out trays	12	16	28	3	1	4	4	2	6
Envelopes and window envelopes	12	11	23	4	6	10	3	4	7
Flyers, junk mail	15	19	34	2	1	3	2	2	4
Paper egg cartons	10	14	24	3	2	5	6	5	11
Paper towel tubes	12	14	26	3	3	6	4	3	7
Pizza boxes (not too greasy)	16	13	29	2	3	5	1	4	5
Telephone books	15	17	32	-	2	2	2	1	3

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Kitchen - containers</b>									
Aseptic (tetrapak) containers/soup boxes	9	8	17	6	5	11	3	8	11
Metal food cans (i.e. tuna, pet food)	15	16	31	3	1	4	1	4	5
* Aluminum foil (i.e. pie plates)	7	4	11	3	4	7	4	5	9
Milk/ juice cartons	17	13	30	3	2	5	-	5	5
Glass bottles and jars	18	17	35	1	-	1	-	4	4
Wine/Liquor bottles	16	17	33	2	1	3	1	3	4
Plastic tubs and lids (i.e. yogurt tubs/cottage cheese/ sour cream containers)	10	14	24	4	3	7	3	4	7

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Kitchen - papers</b>									
Detergent boxes	16	16	32	2	-	2	1	4	5
Dry sheet boxes	15	16	31	1	-	1	3	4	7

Items	Recycling All/Most			Recycling Some/Few			Don't Recycle		
	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total	Men	Women	total
<b>Laundry Room – containers</b>									
Empty aerosol cans (brick cleaner, spray paint, starch spray)	8	7	15	2	1	3	9	12	21
Bleach/Detergent/Fabric softener bottles	13	16	29	4	-	4	1	5	6

\* Not all municipalities recycle aluminium foil

Soft cover books: One person doesn't recycle them but donates them to the library.

Empty aerosol cans: One person said this is hazardous waste.

## RECYCLING AWAY FROM HOME

Convenience is a key factor to recycling away from home. Respondents mentioned that if they happen upon a recycle bin, they will deposit their recyclables. Otherwise, most people would not be bothered to save the item until they got home to recycle. One woman mentioned that her husband goes to great lengths to make sure all their items are recycled regardless of where they happen to be.

*In fact, when we go out into the park, like when the kids have soccer and baseball, whatever, and we should grab a pizza before going to the game, he will take the pizza box home with us if there's no recycle area, recycling bin anywhere. If we go for a walk in the park or whatever and we have our bottles and there's no recycle bin to throw our bottles away, he takes it home with us. (York Region Women)*

*For example, right now when everyone's finished their drink it's going to go in the garbage. Naturally they're going to put it in the garbage can because there's no option there for recycling. (Toronto Women)*

*If I'm in the car, I usually just toss it on the floor in the car, and when I get home I put it in the recycle. But if I'm leaving the car before I get home, I try to take it with me and put it in the nearest bin that I see. So it's not necessarily recycled. If there's a recycling facility, yes, but if not, then I'll just put it in the regular garbage. (Whitby Women)*

Toronto was seen to be well equipped with public recycling bins, whereas Whitby was seen to be remiss in this regard. Also, several people noted that parks and recreational facilities usually do not provide recycling containers which did not make sense given the large volume of beverage containers that were disposed of in these venues.

*Whitby doesn't really have it. Toronto had a lot of recycling, more than Whitby, I would say. Oh, yeah, definitely. (Whitby Women)*

*In the Pickering city hall there. They aren't at the arenas. They have them outside the arenas. (Whitby Men)*

*I've never seen recycling bins in the parks. (York Region Women)*


On the other hand, a Toronto apartment dweller confessed that she was much more likely to recycle while she was out, given the ease of slipping items in three-slot recycling bin; recycling in her building entailed more work and dealing with more materials.

A few people noted ruefully that their workplaces did not recycle. This included no recycling in commercial office settings and in a restaurant.


*Know what? No way. No restaurant. They don't recycle. Do you know how many Perrier bottles I threw out today? I worked today at lunch. Ten. That's just Perrier bottles, and then there's – you know. Everything goes just in the garbage bags. (York Region Women)*

## FUTURE OPTIONS TO REDUCING WASTE


Respondents enthusiastically presented many ideas to address the excess garbage problem. Here are a few of the major suggestions for moving public opinion and thus motivating householders to take recycling more seriously:

 As a starting point, some people felt that there was little awareness of the current, critical reality facing the GTA, with the possible ban on exporting garbage.


*It does make sense really. If more people are aware and they're educated, more people would be recycling. I don't think a lot of people think about it being so important. You explaining it here, now I get to see for myself how very, very important it is, but a lot of people are not aware. (Whitby Women)*


 Demonstrate how much household garbage can be recycled; many households could significantly reduce the number of garbage bags if they were diligent recyclers. And, possibly, tally up the annual amount of money wasted on a household basis, when valuable recyclable materials are thrown into the garbage.

*I'd hate to see if we put everything in recycle (maybe do a guinea pig experiment) into a room, and then you go at the end of the year and say, "Okay, Mr. Jones. This is what you consumed in year," it'd be pretty eye-opening, I think. And then if you could attach some money to it, saying, "We saved \$800." (Whitby Men)*

 Show worst-case scenarios of overflowing landfill sites; this is what happens when people do not recycle. They imagined that these visuals would shock most people into doing a better job. Some people were very keen on using scare tactics.

*As well, what might be a good idea is to promote it, have the Toronto Star or Sun or whatever have a front page and let people know exactly what's happening, exactly that we're running out of space to put waste anywhere, break it down and show people exactly what the effects are if you don't choose to do it. Instead of having pretty pictures of recycle, recycle, show them the flip side of it so they actually get that it's real and it's happening and if we don't do it we're in trouble.*

 Demonstrate the new products and packages that are created from recycling materials. This would provide some much needed feedback that residents are missing. Numerous participants wanted to see examples of new items made from their recyclables.

 A small number recommended tying monetary rewards or penalties with diversion. Several different ideas emerged using the carrot or stick financial theme. One suggestion involved reducing the waste management portion of the tax bill for high performance recycling households. Another idea was to introduce a deposit on LCBO containers; advocates believed that the promise of a small cash incentive would prompt high rates of return as in the case of The Beer Store containers. A few people thought that the deposit-return system should apply to soft drink containers.

*Even if you said, okay, this new arena we built was through the recycle program. The people of Durham Region, we've collected enough money from the recycle and saved the landfill site, we built this arena or we built this library. (Whitby Men)*

*I think really what we need to do is divert the garbage. In Michigan, they had pop cans, 5 cent deposit. People wouldn't throw them in the garbage. They'd have them at grocery stores, a machine that would take them and give you back the money. (York Region Men)*

*But if some guy goes around and collects 10,000 can pop lids, I'll see that in the paper where they've gotten someone a wheel chair because they've collected all these pop lids. He's recycled them. Now I see that in the paper, but I never see, "Okay, you guys. The recycling plant this time saved about \$150,000," or Oshawa or Durham saved them \$300,000. I don't see anything like that. But some kid collects pop can lids, it's front page in the news. (Whitby Men)*

## IMPROVING MULTI-RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING PROGRAMS

There were many thoughts on how to increase the participation rate of multi-resident dwellers, including:



### **Education and Promotion**

Education and reminders were seen to be essential components of an effective multi-unit recycling program. The most repeated need was to ensure that all tenants had an up-to-date list of items that could and could not be recycled. Also, residents needed to have details on the preparation of materials for recycling.

Many tenants reported that their buildings had notices posted in public places urging residents to use the recycling bins. Also, most tenants did not own and had never received a list of what materials could be recycled. The only education was on the bins that were material-specific. The educational program must include notices and posters positioned in public areas for all the residents to see as they are coming and going.

*I think knowledge. I think I'd need a little more knowledge of what should be recycled, because I might recycle more. (Whitby Women)*

*Our building is huge. We have the biggest landlord in Canada....They have like a community newspaper, and if they put one of those flyers (a room-by-room list of recyclables) in each of the community newspapers (because they always get slipped through everybody's door so they get put into the mailbox), that would be incredibly useful.*

*Just put it on the back of the apartment doors where you get the safety instructions, stuff like that. There's room on the back of your door for that.*

In addition, effective educational materials must be provided for Toronto's diverse population.

*In our building, not everybody speaks English that fluently, so it could have to be in different languages. Their main language is Arabic, Hindu, Cantonese, whatever.*



### **Management Support**

Ensure that the building superintendent is aware of the program's requirements and is supportive of it. Residents knew that the operational side of the buildings must function effectively and be onside with recycling in order to have an efficient system.



### **Financial Incentives/Penalties**

The facilitator informed the Toronto groups with multi-unit residents that the City was planning to take steps to increase the volume of recycling in these large-scale buildings due to the high proportion of materials that are being landfilled. Generally, most tenants thought this was reasonable providing that the improvement program also included educating tenants.

*If people want to do it that way, this is our environment and we have to live here. And if within a certain amount of time we are unable to breathe properly, have health problems because of these little issues that we could resolve, then they need to enforce certain laws so people get it. It's kind of like the tough love rule: Put it out there, and if you're not willing to do it, then you have maintenance fees, or the superintendent should put extra fees on there if no one's willing to actually try to do something that benefits everybody. It benefits each and every one of us. It's not just for other people.*

A small number of tenants, however, were quite annoyed because they felt their superintendent was overworked and had little recourse if tenants refused to recycle.

Inform residents that there is a financial penalty for not recycling that will be levied on all buildings that do not perform to standard.

*I think there has to be, as you mentioned – I think there has to be education for the apartment dwellers, and if they're not getting their recyclables, it's not being separated, then maybe there should be a fine and management needs to tell the tenants, "If we don't recycle the way we should be, your rent's going to go up. There's going to be a levy or something put on your rent." What else can you do? (Toronto Men)*

While it would be impossible to charge multi-residential deadbeats, they agreed that something has to be done to get the message across. Clearly, many apartment dwellers had not considered who is responsible for collection and who pays the City for the service; unlike curbside residents who pay property taxes, this cost component is just part of their overall rent. Some tenants recommended adding the cost of the internal collection service to the overall rent in buildings that have a low rate of recycling:

*I think if the individual in an apartment was charged for waste removal, say \$15 a month for waste removal —when you sign a lease, it's automatically in there.*

## OTHER SUGGESTIONS:



Provide recycling bins on all floors in the apartment building; staff would be hired to remove and recycle contents.

*You said aesthetically pleasing bins or something. So if you're going to walk to the chute to bring your garbage and the bin's only five steps away from there, it would be a lot easier. It might take away from the hallway, the prettiness of the hallway or whatever, but at least it's in a corner and it's well taken care of and it's not all dirty and stuff from outside or whatever. (Toronto Men)*



Introduce mandatory recycling for multi-resident buildings; the same rule must also apply to curbside recycling in order to emphasize the importance of all sectors recycling.

*Seal all apartment garbage chutes to make people take their garbage where the bins are provided.*

*They need to also change the rules on the buildings, as you were saying, make it mandatory to have recycling on each floor and certain things like that, because it will make a big difference. (Toronto Men)*



A few residents recommended using the tough-love approach of sealing all garbage chutes, thus forcing tenants to use the recycling bins.

*They closed the chutes. They closed the door. They have a lock. They put a thing on the elevator stating every Wednesday they say it's cardboard and stuff. Bring it to the back. So they put all reminders there, and it's happened a lot in our building. But there's always papers, "Put this and this and this and don't put this and this and this." (York Region)*

In addition to increasing the number of bins for recycling, many residents suggested a floor-by-floor collection system with bins that would be emptied by a service. As it is now, they reported, residents take the easy route of stuffing bags down the chute.

*It was a nightmare to recycle, carrying all the stuff down in the elevator, downstairs. If they'd found a way to put a wheely cart on every floor by the elevator, find a little room — a little room on every floor — that would make life — recycling would go up to 80% in multi-family building.*

*You said aesthetically pleasing bins or something. So if you're going to walk to the chute to bring your garbage and the bin's only five steps away from there, it would be a lot easier. It might take away from the hallway, the prettiness of the hallway or whatever, but at least it's in a corner and it's well taken care of and it's not all dirty and stuff from outside or whatever.*

## WRITTEN SUGGESTIONS FOR INCREASING RECYCLING

As the table below indicates participants offered a variety of suggestions that they felt would help them become better recyclers. It included factors such as education about recyclables, continual reminders and updates, feedback on the program's achievements, providing more or better recycling bins and bins for in the home, increased collection frequency (from bi-weekly to weekly in Toronto).

Men	Women
Educate. Educate us more on what is being done with the stuff we recycle. A PSA (or other method) describing the ins and outs of what is to be recycled. More information. (4)	More containers available. More bins. Another box. Provide more boxes to each household. More recycle bins. By giving out more recycling bins. (6)
Make it easier to recycle and compost by providing a second blue box and green bin at not cost. More blue boxes. (2)	Occasional reminders of changes and added recyclables. More information handouts. More information, clearer labelling on packages and recycle bins. (3)
I think it's okay the way it is now. It's ok now (2)	Wheels on boxes. Wheels on blue bins! (2)
Let me know how much good I'm doing by recycling. Let me know if any, how much money it cost or saved.	Proper bins for kitchen in appropriate sizes picture of recycle of pictures showing and depicting what's what. Better faster pick-up in pickup outside apartment building.
Maybe every week (collection).	Stronger bins.
Perhaps more little containers for bathroom etc. split between paper and other recyclables	A great idea would be a magnetized note for the fridge re: recycling.
An easier way to get it to the bins.	Make it different boxes (big picture). Put it in newspapers, TV and TTC, what had thing will happen if we are not recycle.
Nothing.	Remind me of recycling constantly, continually.
Already convenient.	Companies indicate if recyclable.
My case is the fact I live in a condo and outside of a green bin, we recycle fairly well.	Collect more than every other week.
Having a recycling bin on my floor in my apartment building.	For a high rise, have the coloured flyer showing the pictures of recyclable products and on the back of flyer what the recyclable goods are turned into new products. Need more recyclable bins for paper products.

Men	Women
Not sure.	Get the information to us with out any lag
Give people back some money for every product that is put in the recycling bins.	More well designed containers with compartments with compartments for household to separate the recycle items.
Standardise the symbol of recycling material so we are not confused.	We now have recycling in Thornhill every week. Great!
Less sorting/figuring out. Allows mixing of materials to be sorted at the plant.	Many things already make it convenient—the bin & boxes supplied, fridge magnet with information about what goes where, calendars with schedules for pickup-don't know what else
More T.V. ads vs. newspaper ads.	-
More message to educate household about their responsibility on the program. More education to the kids at school. Make it become by-laws in the city.	-

## EXCESSIVE PACKAGING & THE ROLE OF MANUFACTURERS

The issue of excessive and over-elaborate packaging emerged in each group; participants decried the amount of materials that manufacturers are using for packaging. The ruse of enclosing relatively small inner packs in large outer enclosures annoyed consumers and wasted resources. Many residents felt that manufacturers should be called to task for this practice. However, taking the next step was complex – clearly none of the respondents had contacted either guilty product companies or their politicians to complain about this situation.

*I think what you should do, too, is talk to various manufacturers about the amount of packaging that they have, because I wouldn't have to recycle as much crap as I do if I didn't get a little thing of soup in a big box or something like that. So a lot of it is – talk to the manufacturing.*

## COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

### MEDIA REPORTS & RECENT MESSAGES ABOUT RECYCLING



#### Current Garbage Situation

Two themes dominated discussion – recycling messages and the transborder garbage disposal dispute.

Some residents had seen ads providing information about new blue box materials and the introduction of new garbage bags limits. Faithful, committed recyclers applauded this move and proudly noted that they were well within the two- or three-bag limit. Others who had less interest in reducing garbage were somewhat unsettled by the implications, possibly knowing full well that they were on a losing course.

*It's going to get tighter, I guess. You can see it in the newspaper. You can't put as much out next year on the curb. (Whitby Men)*

*I read in the Oshawa Daily or Oshawa News (whatever the case may be) that next year they are going to start looking at your garbage bags, run a sampling and see what's inside. And if it is recycling in there, then they start sending notices or fines. (Whitby Men)*

Generally, aware respondents welcomed advertising about recycling. Given its importance and popularity, they felt the topic deserved media attention.

The issue of garbage export was mentioned in each group. The situation introduced a dilemma – most recyclers understood why the host Michigan communities wanted to halt this practice and thought that other options were available here in Ontario. But what was viable?

*Well, it's going to Michigan right now. (Toronto Men)*

*I don't think we have any business shipping to Michigan, because it's that not-in-my-backyard kind of thing. Well, same with them. They don't want it in their backyard. Wasn't there a plan – there's a mine up north, and we can throw it in there? What's wrong with that? (York Region Men)*

*It's past urgency. It's critical. (Toronto Men)*

Most respondents did not support creating a new landfill site, especially if it was close at hand; it was seen to be incompatible with dense population areas. York Region and Durham Region residents rejected re-opening their local landfills, although some men thought that relatively new Maple residents had no right to complain about the site given that it has been operating for decades.

Many men were quick to recommend alternatives such as transporting the garbage up north to a remote destination or creating state-of-the-art incinerators.

*I hear in Europe that they burn a lot of theirs. They put scrubbers on their smoke stacks and all that, and I think it was five or 10 years ago, a committee went from Toronto over there, seen it*

*all, watched everything, and they come back and said it was too expensive, too expensive then. (Whitby Men)*

They viewed it pragmatically, believing that the government should have the nerve to pick a site in an undeveloped area of the province to site a new landfill location. The concept of willing host community was not considered. Modern engineering could ensure that there was no groundwater damage. Trapping methane gas was also suggested as a positive by-product of landfilling.

It should be noted that very few respondents mentioned the cost implications of either incineration or landfilling when they were considering the viability of these options. Also, it is worth noting that very few respondents suggested that increasing recycling should be the primary solution to conserving landfills.

*Occasionally a report or I'll hear something from a member of the city of Oshawa saying something in the newspaper saying this is what's going on, or you might see something for a tender being out there now for additional services for pick-ups and like that, but nothing ever definitive in terms of, okay, this is what the end output is and this is how much we've saved, if they can ever calculate that. I'm not sure they can. (Whitby Men)*

*They want to start putting police, garbage police around to see what you put in your garbage, too. They were talking about it. (Whitby Men)*

*They could do it the opposite way. Instead of penalizing someone, there should be a random check, and if you're fine, get a coupon or something, you get rewarded for good recycling rather than getting in trouble for throwing a little tiny tin in there. (Whitby Men)*

A few participants had heard via word of mouth that recyclables were being landfilled; one example of this follows. This information was seen as licence to not bother recycling or to do a minimal job.

*Well, I was having drinks with Bob Hunter and he was telling me this. We were talking about the environment, as he would (what else would you talk about with Bob?), and he said up to 50% of our recycling was going into the dump. I don't recycle because of the environment. I don't feel I'm making that much of an impact.*



### **Up To Date List of Accepted Items**

Most participants did not have an up-to-date list of accepted items to recycle. Indeed, some people could not recall when they last saw this item. This was especially prevalent for people living in multi-unit buildings, most of whom have never received a list of items that could be recycled. It was interesting to note the heightened interest in recycling once these neglected respondents became aware of just how many things can be diverted or once they learned that there was minimal preparation required – i.e., labels do not have to be removed.

*They used to say take the labels off, because that paper would end up in the glass. You had to — (Toronto Women)*

For many, it appeared that lack of information was a major barrier to full participation in the program. However, it was evident that multi-unit residents also needed other supports to enhance the accessibility of recycling.

*Nothing. (Toronto Women)*

*I haven't received any notices about what you're supposed to do or how you're supposed to do it. (Toronto Women)*

*I think knowledge. I think I'd need a little more knowledge of what should be recycled, because I might recycle more. (Whitby Women)*

*I still haven't got my head fully around what to recycle and what goes in the garbage. There are a few rules that still have to be applied. (Whitby Men)*

*Do you know what would be really good? If they had something for the fridge that was a magnet that you could put a list of dos and don'ts. (Whitby Women)*

A few respondents mentioned having a current recycling list on hand, while other multi-unit residents indicated that they relied solely on the information printed directly on the bins.

*Where we had the disposal chute on each floor, they tacked one up on the wall there. (Toronto Men)*

A few Toronto curbside recyclers noted that they received a direct mail newsletter about leaf recycling.



### **What happens to recyclables?**

According to many respondents, there is insufficient feedback on the outcome of recycling and the overall program's effectiveness. One of the more extreme reactions to this lack of confirmation that materials are being reused is that some sceptics doubt that their items are being recycled at all.

*Well, I was having drinks with Bob Hunter and he was telling me this. We were talking about the environment, as he would (what else would you talk about with Bob?), and he said up to 50% of our recycling was going into the dump. I don't recycle because of the environment. I don't feel I'm making that much of an impact. (Toronto Men)*

*No one tells me what they – there's no newsletter, no nothing to tell you where it goes. (Whitby Men)*

Recyclers are doing their part, more or less, and they believe that they should be told what happens to their recyclables once they are picked up from the curb. Now with the advent of green bin recycling, participants also wanted information on the program's progress.

*In particular for the green bins that have come out, you want to see some type of a turn-around in terms of is this actually generating some benefit overall? Are we reducing something? How many trucks are not now going to Detroit or Michigan as a result of what we're trying to do? And I've also read those articles in The Economist. They quoted even some numbers for the first phase of that pilot project, so that was kind of useful and relevant, but I'd like to see more stuff like that. (York Region Men)*

Others asked for the rationale of commingling recyclables, given years of diligently sorting the bottles and cans from the fibre stream.

*I couldn't understand how it would be cheaper for them to put all the stuff in the same box and have to sort through the box than to have one of paper and one of glass and metal. That just seems so arbitrary to me. So I don't know what they're doing. I imagine a big building somewhere where the stuff is going by and they're going through it. (York Region Women)*



### **How has your recycling program changed?**

The given for blue box recycling is that the programs are evolving, and usually this is seen as a positive sign that it is improving. Specifically, a multitude of blue box recycling changes has occurred throughout the GTA. In some parts of York Region, the frequency of recycling collection has increased to once a week while the garbage pick-up has been reduced to once every two weeks. This shift in collection frequency was seen as a sign that recycling is the priority, not garbage. Several Toronto and York Region residents observed that recyclables are now commingled. Durham residents observed changes in their system, such as green glass bottles are added to the list of accepted items, while egg cartons are no longer recyclable. Some people remarked that it is easier to recycle given relaxed preparatory requirements; but others lag behind in their knowledge of these improvements.

*Actually, the last time, I think they're taking the green bottles now. They didn't used to take the green bottles. You know the green ginger ale bottles and all that? (Whitby Women)*

*You're supposed to wash the stuff, but the thing is there's somebody that says you don't have to wash it, and my husband says, "No, you have to wash it." (Whitby Women)*

*The garbage, the regular garbage, used to be every week. Now it's once every two weeks. So they swapped around. (York Region Men)*

*They just introduced the green bin recently. I think it started maybe the beginning of the year, so it was changing – it used to be for recycling, it was once every two weeks. Now it becomes almost every week. (York Region Men)*

*No, they don't take egg cartons, but they want you to put them in the compost. Did you know that?(Whitby Women)*

*Recycling is better. It used to be every two weeks. Garbage is every week. The blue bins, you can use two or three, even four. (York Region Men)*

## REACTION TO RECYCLING ADS – “DID YOU KNOW...”

### Introduction:

Copies of the newspaper print messages that appeared in newspapers in the GTA were introduced for discussion. The theme of the six messages was the end-use of recyclable materials. The ads featured 2-litre pop bottles, milk cartons, magazines, envelopes, aluminium cans, and plastic milk jugs.

**Did You Know...**

*Nine recycled 2-litre pop bottles can be made into one XL polyester t-shirt*

**RECYCLE EVERY DAY ♻️ MAKE IT A HABIT!**

Your participation in recycling programs is helping to reduce our reliance on landfills for waste disposal. Your efforts minimize waste disposal costs and help preserve and protect the environment at the same time.

For municipalities across the province - including Durham, Halton and Peel  
**WASTE REDUCTION IS PRIORITY**

Image provided through the Canadian Recyclers' Association and Ontario Environmental Management Association and their members as part of a government-funded Waste Reduction Program.

Region of Peel Making life go on

**Did You Know...**

*Recovered fibres from recycled beverage cartons can be used to make tissues, paper towels, paper bags and office paper*

**RECYCLE EVERY DAY ♻️ MAKE IT A HABIT!**

Your participation in recycling programs is helping to reduce our reliance on landfills for waste disposal. Your efforts minimize waste disposal costs and help preserve and protect the environment at the same time.

For municipalities across the province - including Durham, Halton and Peel  
**WASTE REDUCTION IS PRIORITY**

Image provided through the Canadian Recyclers' Association and Ontario Environmental Management Association and their members as part of a government-funded Waste Reduction Program.

Region of Peel Making life go on

**Did You Know...**

*Just 14 per cent of old magazines are recovered for recycling*

**RECYCLE EVERY DAY ♻️ MAKE IT A HABIT!**

Your participation in recycling programs is helping to reduce our reliance on landfills for waste disposal. Your efforts minimize waste disposal costs and help preserve and protect the environment at the same time.

For municipalities across the province - including Durham, Halton and Peel  
**WASTE REDUCTION IS PRIORITY**

Image provided through the Canadian Recyclers' Association and Ontario Environmental Management Association and their members as part of a government-funded Waste Reduction Program.

Region of Peel Making life go on

**Did You Know...**

*Only 15 per cent of Canadian printing and writing papers are recovered for recycling*

**RECYCLE EVERY DAY ♻️ MAKE IT A HABIT!**

Your participation in recycling programs is helping to reduce our reliance on landfills for waste disposal. Your efforts minimize waste disposal costs and help preserve and protect the environment at the same time.

For municipalities across the province - including Durham, Halton and Peel  
**WASTE REDUCTION IS PRIORITY**

Image provided through the Canadian Recyclers' Association and Ontario Environmental Management Association and their members as part of a government-funded Waste Reduction Program.

Region of Peel Making life go on

**Did You Know...**

*It takes the same amount of energy to make 20 aluminum cans from recycled aluminum as it takes to make one aluminum can from raw materials*

**RECYCLE EVERY DAY ♻️ MAKE IT A HABIT!**

Your participation in recycling programs is helping to reduce our reliance on landfills for waste disposal. Your efforts minimize waste disposal costs and help preserve and protect the environment at the same time.

For municipalities across the province - including Durham, Halton and Peel  
**WASTE REDUCTION IS PRIORITY**

Image provided through the Canadian Recyclers' Association and Ontario Environmental Management Association and their members as part of a government-funded Waste Reduction Program.

Region of Peel Making life go on

**Did You Know...**

*It takes 240 recycled plastic jugs to make one plastic Muskoka chair*

**RECYCLE EVERY DAY ♻️ MAKE IT A HABIT!**

Your participation in recycling programs is helping to reduce our reliance on landfills for waste disposal. Your efforts minimize waste disposal costs and help preserve and protect the environment at the same time.

For municipalities across the province - including Durham, Halton and Peel  
**WASTE REDUCTION IS PRIORITY**

Image provided through the Canadian Recyclers' Association and Ontario Environmental Management Association and their members as part of a government-funded Waste Reduction Program.

Region of Peel Making life go on

Although most respondents claimed that they were regular readers of daily and community weekly newspapers, very few were able to recall having seen any of the print messages.

In their estimation, the print ads lacked “oomph” or strong visual appeal. The messages lacked initial impact, and when they were examined, provided little content worthy of attention. Although the messages provided information that they noted was of interest – namely, the fate of recycled materials – these particular executions failed to capture their attention.

Also, the message was not clearly presented. As the following quote indicates, the wording caused confusion.

*You know what the problem with that is? You’ve got to read it four times to understand it. Maybe I’m an idiot, but you’ve got to read it four times for it to go, “20 cans, one can, new raw materials.”*  
**(Toronto Men)**

Consequently, helpful respondents suggested many improvements that could enhance their appeal. Suggestions included colour images would have more impact than black and white pictures and showing reused items – new packages and products. They would rather see the plastic Muskoka chair than the empty milk container. While it was necessary to promote the items that could be recycled, they hoped that forthcoming mass media campaigns would feature exciting content about what is happening to their recyclables.

*I think, just looking at these, because it’s just showing the pop bottles, I don’t really know – unless you actually read it, you don’t really know or you don’t get the full impact of it.* **(Toronto Women)**

*I think the ads are all too clean and too sterile. I think you need to get down and dirty.* **(Toronto Men)**

*The colour ads, yeah, the print needs to be bigger. That could go in each of the newspapers, or even Financial Times or whatever they read. This sort of thing could be like the poster when you see all these big rows of pop cans, go and be above in the Loblaws and the big stores, above that, again in bigger print so people know to recycle.* **(Toronto Women)**

As noted earlier, some respondents were partial to negative messages, such as showing the consequences are not recycling. Some people wanted to be scared into recycling. It was also suggested that before and after recycling images should be presented.

*But I still think we need to be scared into realizing – because I don’t think Torontonians understand. I’ve driven the death valley from Windsor up here and seen how many trucks you pass, and they’re all Toronto garbage trucks, the big, big monster 26-wheel.* **(Toronto Men)**

*As well, what might be a good idea is to promote it, have the Toronto Star or Sun or whatever have a front page and let people know exactly what’s happening, exactly that we’re running out of space to put waste anywhere, break it down and show people exactly what the effects are if you don’t choose to do it. Instead of having pretty pictures of recycle, recycle, show them the flip side of it so they actually get that it’s real and it’s happening and if we don’t do it we’re in trouble.* **(Toronto Women)**

*Have an ad, a landfill site, a farmer's field or a play area. This is what recycle has saved, something that you can visually see, okay, I'm recycling, I'm not making a landfill site, I'm making a green place for kids to play in or a farmer to grow his field rather than a dump. (Whitby Men)*

*We should advertise, then, this is what landfill does to the community, and so if we have more recycling, maybe we won't have this. That's another perspective. (Whitby Women)*

Gender differences were noted regarding the target audience for these messages. Many women recommended focusing on families, and both men and women suggested that environmental themes (negative and positive messages) would be useful in prompting people to pay attention to diverting waste. However, men were most likely to insist that the most effective content would address the financial impact of recycling, specifically a cost benefit analysis of recycling versus landfilling.

Some people wanted subsequent ad campaigns to focus on direct financial incentives such as lower taxes or deposit returns. However, this message theme was not appealing for many others.

*I think people need to be reminded about the future and the next generation and what will happen if the recycling doesn't happen. That's what kind of I think caught my husband right from the very beginning. (York Region Women)*

*Or you could say your taxes will be reduced if you recycle more. We want to save money in the long run. (Whitby Women)*

*Can we see what the benefit is? Even if they cannot substantiate their tax or dollar benefits, say recycling is contributing to a 10% reduction in our landfills, which cuts back CO2 emissions, whatever the case may be. (Whitby Men)*

## SUGGESTED MESSAGE THEMES

Respondents were invited to create messages that would motivate residents to recycle. It was interesting to note that women focused on the family and presented an image of children suffering as a result of not recycling.







*Our focus is families, so basically everyone. Our message is that basically if we don't learn how to recycle, we're going to be dumping in our own backyards. So our visual aspect would be that we have a child carrying a teddy bear visualizing how it used to be in the past at his home with the garden in the backyard and so on and so forth, and they're surrounded with piles of garbage. So this has actually become their new home as they think back and dream and fantasize about how it used to be. That is our message. Then we have a little cheeky thing that says, "If only we had recycled." (Toronto Women)*

Whereas men suggested that the financial benefits of recycling would be the greatest motivator to recycle more.

*Talk to that increase to 67% compared to the previous year. Give a net benefit, cost benefit, as a municipality. Even take it to the next level if you like and say this is what it translates into in terms of overall taxes or property taxes or whatever this cost gets written into. Build a relationship.*

## WRITTEN SUGGESTIONS FOR MESSAGE THEMES

In addition, respondents were asked to write their ideas for message themes that would motivate them to recycle more. A wide range of themes were mentioned, reinforcing the comments they made during the discussion portion of the focus group. They included:


-  environmental impacts of recycling and not recycling –short and longer term
-  economic impacts of recycling and cost avoidance implications
-  positive gains made by the recycling program
-  reasons for recycling
-  basic information about what can and cannot be recycled
-  recognition awards for communities that are good recyclers

Men	Women
Environmental and cost benefits clearly quantified. How it affects the public financially, health wise, in the future. How money saved from diverting waste can be used for other useful items. i.e. new park equipment, healthcare. How the material is saving money and how it's used.(4)	Showing tomorrows to come, the future if we don't. The change to the environment if we don't. The results we would have if we did not recycle. (3)
What happens to the environment if we don't recycle. The outcome if we don't recycle in the near future. (issue's in the news with our garbage and the United States) Show public the negative impacts i.e. global warming etc. vs. "Do you know..." Show how recycling affects us all in terms of harm to environment, cost to ship garbage. (4)	A message that shows me how my input is being used to promote healthy environment in the community. Knowing how recycling makes a difference and why it is so important to recycle.(2)
To let the people know how good the program is working. Those that highlight the absolute benefit of the program. What difference am I making would encourage me to do more. (3)	Reasons why to recycle! Community rewards! Award system. (2)
I think TV would be the best medium.	T.V. ads. T.V. (2)
Room by room analysis. Waste reduction checklist.	Easy basic with photos of what you can recycle or not. The commercial was a good idea and to the point.
Do it for a better future environment.	That our children and the entire world will suffer if we do not control it now!
Keep.	Do or die
Less garbage is but better environment.	Messages saying what recycle ideas are made into using = equal sign.
Friendly competition results between areas.	The useful end products.
-	Constant reminders.
-	Very bad health problem.
-	Reduce landfill. Don't waste your kids' materials.
-	1. T.V. Ads quick 30-60 second ads. 2. Radio ads quick effective 3. Government help – how, where, why ads 4. Teach children from school and community centres and adults i.e., in different languages in apartment building when you sign a lease. 5. Picture brochure of garbage items where to place them.
-	Changing all advertising to be reminding people to recycle.
-	Combination of scaring (where will the garbage go?) and entertaining (whimsical commercials to restate main points)
-	I recycle almost everything.
-	Not necessary. I devote to recycle.


Suggestions for improving recycling and making it more convenient.

## REACHING RECYCLERS – COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Participants were asked to select the best way to reach them; also this included other effective ways that the recycling messages could be conveyed. As shown in the tables that follow, there are a number of media that were seen to have potential.

 Television, community newspapers, direct mail and posters in community locations are all popular means for reaching the diverse GTA recycling audiences.

 Websites, e-newsletters, and notices in community centres.

 Booths in malls with staff prepared to answer questions and provide information would provide an opportunity for information exchange and resolution of particular recycling problems.

	Men's Best Way	Women's Best Way	Total's Best Way
TV	14	17	31
Community newspapers	11	12	23
At your home/direct mail	9	12	21
Billboards, posters in community locations	10	11	21
Community & recreation centres	8	8	16
Websites, E-newsletters	7	5	12

	Men's Also Good	Women's Also Good	Total's Also Good
Mall displays with knowledgeable staff	10	9	19
Websites, E-newsletters	8	10	18
Community newspapers	7	10	17
Community & recreation centres	5	9	14
Billboards, posters in community locations	5	8	13
At your home/direct mail	6	5	11
TV	3	4	4

## APPENDIX – DISCUSSION GUIDE

### DISCUSSION GUIDE – STEWARDSHIP ONTARIO

October 24, 2005

#### Moderator's Introduction

Describe the purpose and scope of the study - the focus groups are part of a multi-phase research program about recycling in the GTA. The aim is to create the best possible program in order to maximize the amount of waste that is kept out of the landfill site. A 60% goal has been set by the province.

Participants will be encouraged to provide honest accounts of their thoughts and experiences related to recycling and waste that their household generates. They should include comments about other family members' experiences, in addition to their own.

The contents of proceedings, both the discussion and their written comments, will be treated in strictest confidence. Ensure that all participants agree with the videotaping and note that client observers are watching proceedings in an adjacent room.

#### **OPENING/WARM-UP DISCUSSION**

##### **THEIR COMMUNITY'S RECYCLING PROGRAM, HOW IS IT DOING?**

Have they heard about it recently? Are people talking about it? Probe both individual and community perspectives. Have they received any information about its impact? (Any recall of promotions? Any reference to the landfill crisis? News stories?)

##### **HOW HAS IT CHANGED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS?**

Invite discussion of its evolution and the impact that these changes have had on their own practices. Has it become onerous for householders or is it reasonable to ask people to do their utmost of minimize garbage? (Any reference to Markham's major achievements, compared with other communities?)

##### **HOW DOES IT WORK IN THEIR HOUSEHOLD - WHO TAKES PART?**

Has it become second nature for everyone in his or her home? Any resisters? Who doesn't help? What, if anything, could be done to make this work better for them? Invite all ideas.

##### **ARE FAMILY MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED IN SEPARATION?**

Is it the job exclusively of those who cook and clean up after meals? What about kid and adult snackers, who don't cook, have they been brought into the loop? What do they do with their stuff – put it in the garbage or leave it for someone else to recycle?

## HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING PLAN

### TASK

Ask respondents to draw a bird's eye view of their house with all the rooms. Indicate where garbage cans and recycling bins. Include adjoining inside and outside spots where they store their recycling boxes and garbage bags.

Brief discussion of different systems and what works for the different households. Focus on storage areas and bin placement.

### TASK

#### Recycling items/types of things

What are the big categories or items and which ones are smaller?

(Respondents will record them) Review lists - any that they have to remind themselves of? Any that confuse them – is it or is it not recyclable?

Now thinking about the major rooms where there is waste and recyclables – kitchen, bathroom(s), bedroom(s), home office/den/family room and laundry.

Hand out list with items categorized by rooms – ask respondents to check each item – recycle usually and rarely or never recycle. Do they have a list at home now? Where is it kept?

#### Focus on kitchen and organic waste.

What does this stream consist of - are they aware that they can now divert meat, fish and bones, dairy products and baked goods in addition to fruit and vegetables? How do they feel about setting these items aside? Any in particular that they find awkward or problematic? Which, if any, are easy? Any particularly hard to remember?

Invite participants to provide a description of a meal from preparation through to cleaning up? What happens to the waste – recyclables, organics and waste? Do they reserve the materials in another holding container as an interim step before filling the blue box?

#### Focus on paper–

kitchen, living room, office, bedrooms, bathrooms etc. Separated in each room or combined? What is their routine way of handling paper? How much gets stuffed in the garbage?

#### Focus on plastic –

kitchen, bathroom, laundry, workshop – separated at source? Routine way of handling plastic and likely rooms where it goes in the garbage?

#### Focus on beverage containers –

kitchen, family rooms, kids room, vehicle. Where do they go when they are empty?

Now looking back – where are the prime spots in their house where recyclables go into the garbage?

What, if anything, could be done to make this work better for them? Invite all ideas. Note that participation in some households is lukewarm - why is that? What can be done to solve this? Are they

missing any particular tools i.e. small recycling bins and blue bags (multi-family building) or more blue boxes (curbside)? Educational material?

**Recycling away from home**

public places, parks, recreational centres, malls, work, schools, on the street...etc. Do they notice the bins? Do they use them? Is there sufficient evidence of recycling activity away from home?

**Future options for reducing waste**

Currently about 50% of recyclables are going to landfill. Now some municipalities are addressing this problem by introducing:

bag limits permitting only 2 or 3 bags per household. Additional bags must have a tag, purchased for \$1.

Pay per bag - \$1 fee is charged for every bag of garbage

Which of the two options would you be more likely to support in order to reduce waste? It should be noted that both approaches have been successful in reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill.

## **COMMUNICATION MATERIALS**

### **Feedback and its role**

What is happening to the recyclables? Any curiosity? Any feedback? What impact does it have on respondents - show sample print ads and video ad that focuses on this topic. Is this new news? It is rewarding to learn this? Do/would they look for this when they shop?

### **Media Reports**

Have they seen or heard any messages recently about recycling in their community? (Aware of landfill shortages and export to Michigan, debates about incineration, etc.) If aware, has it sparked any concerns? Prompted them to change behaviour in any way? What do they hear about recycling in Ontario and how do we compare with other provinces?

### **Local C&E**

What have they been sent/received? When? Did they read it? Did they keep it for future reference? Is it clear and straightforward? Anything confusing? Ads in local papers, posters, etc. What messages (words or images) stand out? Contents comprehensive or are there missing bits of information?

### **Reaching Them**

What are the best ways? Direct mail, newspaper, poster/billboards, community groups, website, TV ads.....

### **Content**

What subjects interest them? Link content with medium. Community pride theme - would this stir them to act? Are challenges and on-going feedback about how they are doing interesting approaches? What about impact of the urgency of reducing and problems of disposal? Impact of being aware of current reduction levels - quote for each of the 3 locations - X% Toronto, X% York and %% Durham. Judge this against the provincial target of 60%. Impact?

### **Reaching kids and teens**

- school programs, websites (videos and games) Show sample website print.

### **Believable Sources**

Most credible? Less credible? Any differentiation at all? Other sources of information that had an impact: word of mouth, etc.

### **Group Task**

Break into two groups - each will have the task of creating a TV ad that is designed to tackle the issue of all the recyclables (50% of them) that are going into resident's garbage. Give participants 5-7 minutes to work on the ad, then invite them to present their ideas. Discuss the different messages. What are the central points of each of them?

## WRAP-UP DISCUSSION

Summary of the highs and the lows of recycling, always seeking for solutions and ways to improve it.

Distribute short questionnaire and ask respondents to complete it prior to departure.

Thank everyone and distribute honorariums.

## VISUALS & STIMULI

Samples	Ads	Fact Sheets & Calendars	Other
Mini blue, grey (Toronto) & green, garbage can	Recycling Just goes on and on (TO)	York Durham	Website for kids-recycling
Truck	Other print	Toronto Multi-res	
Composter		Toronto Curbside	
		Room-by-room list	