

## E&E Project Evaluation Form

\*\*\*\*Please be advised that completed evaluations are made available publicly and are posted on Stewardship Ontario's E&E Fund web site\*\*\*\*

**Project Name/Number/Priority area:** Hamilton Waste Watch Communication and Education Project/ PN 125/ Communication & Education

**Lead Sponsor/competed by/date:** City of Hamilton / Dennis Guy / May 2007

**Project Duration:** November 2006 to May 2007

**Total project value:** \$775,000

**E&E funding amount:** \$50,000

### **Section 1 –To be completed by Project Applicant**

**1) What were the Project Goals and Objectives (as per the E&E Application and/or Contract)?**

- Increase blue box recycling diversion by 15%;
- Increase capture rate of specific blue box materials;
- Increase blue box participation to 90%; and,
- Increase recyclable materials revenue.
- Better understand how Hamilton residents currently receive recycling information and how they prefer to receive recycling information
- Identify the components of a successful communication strategy

**2) Were the goals and objectives met? (and if not why not?)**

Overall blue box recycling diversion increase by 8%, capture rates of specific blue box materials increased, blue box participation sits at approximately 95%, a current understanding of resident communication preferences was gained, and six key components were identified to develop a successful communication strategy. Revenues did not increase as expected given a decrease in certain commodity prices, especially corrugated cardboard.

**3) Summary of Project Accomplishments (i.e. what did the project do/achieve?):**

The project brings us one step closer to knowing what forms of communication work best for the Hamilton market. It helps us understand what types of messaging Hamiltonians respond to best and what types of messaging take away from our key messages. It also brings insight into what level of knowledge about blue box recycling Hamilton residents have by examining their practices at the curb. This information will allow us to evolve in our message development and improve on our communication strategy to be more effective as we move forward.

**4) Summary of Project Limitations (e.g. is there anything that should have been done differently?)**

Municipalities communicating environmental messages will need to continually evolve as audiences, media, and methods of communicating evolve. We must continue to try different approaches using different forms of media. The limitation that will remain constant is that we cannot reach all customers, i.e., residents using a single communication channel. Each municipality or region or province will have to determine what works best in their area given the options available to them.

**4) What do you consider to have been the key “lessons learned” from this project? Does your project/activity represent a “best practice”?**

- Mascot Distracted From The Message – love him or hate him Blue Box Man took all the attention away from the message of ‘what goes in’ the blue box.
- Multi-Media Approach – in Hamilton, there is no one single medium that can be used to reach all residents and therefore information must be disseminated through multiple sources. Note: this will differ amongst Ontario municipalities.
- Get Outside The Kitchen – capture rates continue to show that recycling is well received in the kitchen but forgotten in other key areas of a household, such as the bathroom, laundry room and living room.
- Grocery Store List Principle – focus on items that have low capture rates. Like forgetting your grocery list when you go to the store, residents remember only the most common items on the blue box list – those items that have been acceptable since the inception of most curbside collection programs.
- Hit Singles Principle – create a sustained campaign that releases a ‘hit single’ on a continual basis, rather than trying to promote too many all at once. This follows on the Grocery Store List Principle.

**6) What specifically are municipal staff doing with the experiences and data from this project? Do you have plans to apply these lessons in your program? Please explain how.**

We are currently undergoing a review of our communication strategy to incorporate the findings of the research and the lessons learned regarding implementation of the communication plan.

The findings will have direct impact on how we choose to roll out the next wave of blue box recycling communications.

Hamilton City staff recognize that communication strategy development must be cyclical and on-going in order to meet the dynamics of human behaviour change.

**7) Has your municipal council been informed about the project and its results?**

Council receives regular updates regarding waste management audits, public opinion surveys and funding opportunities.

**8) Do you think there are opportunities to share/replicate the successful elements of this project with other Ontario programs? If yes, how and where?**

Yes. Results have already been shared through phone conversations, emails and Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators workshops in addition to the final project report, the Evaluation, and the Summary being posted on the Stewardship Ontario web site.

**9) Did this project result in either reduced costs per tonne of Blue Box waste recycled and/or increased Blue Box tonnes diverted? (Please explain)**

The project resulted in an increase in Blue Box tonnes diverted.

The amount of recyclable materials collected at curbside increased from 41,632 tonnes in 2005 to 45,144 tonnes in 2006, an increase of 8%.

**Section 2 –To be completed by Stewardship Ontario (and reviewed by applicant)**

**9) Did this project do what it set out to do? If not, what were the reasons/ barriers?**

As per the original project application, the objectives of this project were to:

- Increase blue box recycling diversion by 15% for the City of Hamilton
- Increase capture rate of specific blue box materials we're not capturing
- Increase blue box participation to 90%
- Increase recyclable materials revenue by \$500,000 in 2005; \$325,000 in 2006

As mentioned by the project applicant above, diversion of blue box materials increased 8% from 2005 to 2006, and capture rates of specific blue box materials increased. The City estimates that blue box participation sits at approximately 95%. A current understanding of resident communication preferences was gained, and six key components were identified to develop a successful communication strategy. Revenues did not increase as expected given a decrease in certain commodity prices, especially corrugated cardboard.

**10) What are the key learnings from this project? Are there any next steps? What is being done to share the results?**

The key learnings are outlined by the project proponent in question 4 above. These are in-line with other consumer research carried out under E&E projects 105, 199 and 186, in particular the fact that most residents remember the most common items on the blue box list – those items that have been acceptable since the inception of most curbside collection programs – but that they are much less knowledgeable of the items that have been added to many programs in recent years (e.g. polycoat and gable top, plastics #4-6, ect), hence the importance of focusing on these.

As a next step, Hamilton has been approached to request permission to post a copy of its Strategic Communication Plan on the newly launched P&E module on the Knowledge Network. The tool provides some context on the importance for municipalities of developing such a plan, and walks the user through the steps involved in such an exercise. A “Grab and Go” section provides actual examples of completed communication plans, in addition to links to AMRC’s P&E winners.

**11) Was the project good value for the money (e.g. were there measurable program or system cost reduction benefits, cost effective tonnage increases, etc?)**

The E&E Fund contributed \$50,000 to this project, which was estimated at \$775,000 overall. As reported above by the project proponent, the amount of recyclable materials recovered increased significantly, from 41,632 tonnes in 2005 to 45,144 tonnes in 2006, an increase of 8%.

**12) Does this project represent “best practices”? If yes, explain.**

The nearly completed report for the Blue Box Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project, a \$2.5 million E&E Fund initiative awarded to KPMG, establishes “Appropriately planned, designed, and funded Promotion and Education program” as a

Fundamental Best Practice. It will be important for the City to allocate adequate funds to its revised P&E strategy – the report found that municipalities achieving 60% recovery levels, on average, tended to spend approximately \$1 on Promotion and Education – as well as to continue monitoring its impact through on-going waste audits and other means, and to adjust if need be.